

seminar

india-seminar.com

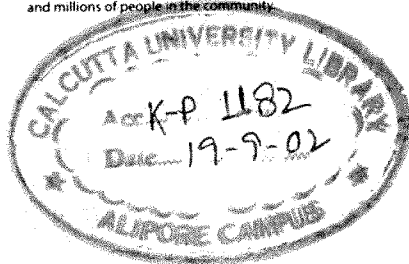


32

india annual
497 • JANUARY 2001



It's not just a new mark. It embodies our commitment. To pursue excellence. To make India more self-reliant. To provide world-class products and services. And above all, to provide a better life. Tata. Improving the quality of life - for consumers, employees, shareholders and millions of people in the community.



B2B

ONE 2 ONE

IETF 2001 INDIA EXPO

CI's International Engineering, Manufacturing & Technology Fair

PARTNER COUNTRY - SPAIN

15 - 19 February 2001 * Pragati Maidan, New Delhi - India

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Spread over 65,000 sq.mtrs.
- * More than 300,000 visitors
- * Over 25 participating countries
- * 7 focussed business fairs
- * International business conferences
- * Visiting international trade delegations
- * Buyer-Seller meets / Factory visits
- * ACMA's exposition for automotive aftermarket & services

THE IETF ADVANTAGE

- * A unique, comprehensive B2B International fair
- * Segmented, well-defined relevant sectors on one platform providing comprehensive / synergistic inputs
- * Networking with CEOs, policy makers, business delegations
- * Forging strategic business partnerships

PARTNER COUNTRY : SPAIN
Over 160 participating companies

Indo-Spanish Investment and Business Co-operation Forum

Sectors of industry represented

Industrial engineering, Electrical and electronic engineering, Large scale projects, Agricultural machinery and technologies, Health related technologies and equipment, Building materials and equipment, Services, Food

Register online as a priority business visitor at
www.ietf2001.com

For more information, please contact Ms. K. V. Vidyia



Confederation of Indian Industry

Gate No. 31, North Block, Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium
New Delhi-110003, India

Phones: 91-11-4366225/73/76/81 * Fax: 91-11- 4366271, 4367844
e-mail: ietf2001@cionline.org * Website: www.cionline.org

Yes! I am interested in attending IETF 2001 as

☐ Visitor ☐ Delegate to the conference.

Please send me _____ no.(s) of FREE invitation card(s).

Name _____ Designation _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ Tel. _____

Fax _____ E-mail _____

FOCUSED BUSINESS FAIRS AT IETF 2001

Building inter-sectoral synergies



CLEANTECH ENVIRONMENT 2001
Exhibition of cleaner processes,
climate mitigation and renewables

ENTERPRISE 2001

10th exclusive exposition
for small enterprises
sub-contracting and support services
Co-sponsored by Small Industries
Development Bank of India (SIDBI)



The international fair of
the metal & foundry sector
In association with
The Institute of Indian Foundrymen



An international fair for process
control, automation, measurement
and analytical technology



for Manufacturing

IT applications for Engineering
and Manufacturing



The complete airconditioning,
refrigeration, heating &
ventilation industry fair



2nd international exhibition
on welding technology
In association with
The Indian Institute of Welding (IIW)



A smile. A teardrop. A raised eyebrow.
A flare of the nostrils. A frown. These are
just a few manifestations of a language
that transcends the spoken word.

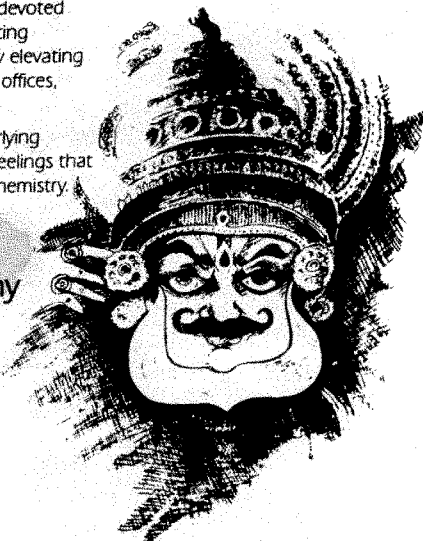
Spontaneously communicating
feelings like ardour, agony, ecstasy,
excitement, fervour, fright, passion and
pain. All housed in the human body and
triggered by amazing chemical reactions.

Devotion and dedication have enabled a
handful to master the art of self-expression.
Fostering it to perfection. In the visual arts,
the performing arts, music and dance.

At Herdillia, we've also devoted
over two decades perfecting
chemical reactions, thereby elevating
the quality of life. In homes, offices,
industries and in agriculture.

It's our way of expressing underlying
feelings. Like concern and care. Feelings that
are an inherent part of Herdillia's chemistry.

Excitement, anxiety, agony
and ecstasy -
some amazing chemical
reactions we all possess




**HERDILLIA
CHEMICALS
LIMITED**

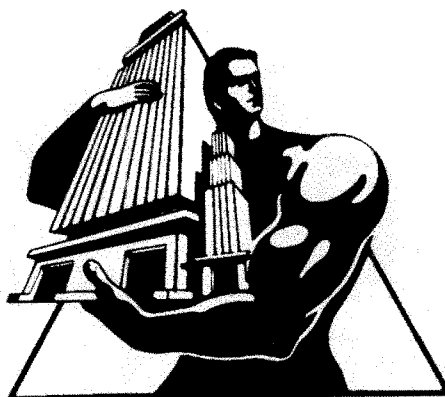
Air India Building,
Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021

Because chemicals are a fact of life

The ISO 9002 certification covers the facilities for Phenol, Acetone, Phthalic Anhydride,
Diacetone Alcohol, Dodecyl Phenol, Isobutyl Benzene, Diphenyl Oxide and Isophorone.

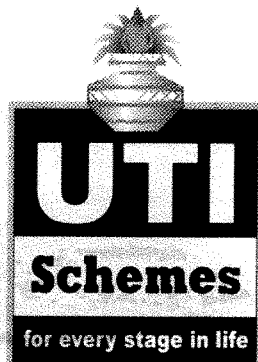


Dazal/HCL/E-15



**Ambuja
Cement**

Investments in UTI Treasured by almost every Indian Family



Savings, invested rightly to match your needs, can secure your future financially. UTI offers a range of schemes to suit every need of yours at every stage in your life.

Currently, as per Finance Act 1999, income received from investments in units of any scheme / plan of UTI is tax-free in the hands of all categories of investors under section 10(33) of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

BALANCED FUNDS

Unit Scheme 1964 (US-64)

Unit Scheme 1995 (US-95)

REGULAR INCOME PLAN

Monthly Income Plans (MIP)

SCHEME FOR CHILDREN

Children's Career Plan (CCP)

SCHEME FOR WOMEN

Grihalakshmi Unit Plan (GUP)

POST-RETIREMENT SCHEME

Retirement Benefit Plan (RBP)

EQUITY FUNDS

Masterplus, Mastergain, PEF, Grandmaster & Mastergrowth.

TAX SAVING SCHEMES

Unit Linked Insurance Plan (ULIP)

UTI Equity Tax Savings Plan (ETSP)

SECTORAL FUNDS

UTI Growth Sectors Fund (Brand Value, Pharma and Healthcare, Software, Petro and Services)
UGS 10000 (MNC Fund)

INDEX FUNDS

Master Index Fund (MIF)

Nifty Index Fund (NIF)

Index Select Equity Fund (ISEF)

LIQUID FUNDS

UTI-Bond Fund (UBF)

UTI Money Market Fund (MMF)

GILT FUND

UTI G-Sec Fund

FUND FOR TRUSTS AND SOCIETIES

Unit Scheme for Charitable & Religious Trusts & Registered Societies (CRTS-81)



UNIT TRUST OF INDIA

INDIA'S LARGEST MUTUAL FUND

13, Sir Vithaldas Thackersey Marg, New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400020

Western Zonal Office: Mumbai: 6525686. • Eastern Zonal Office: Calcutta: 2436571.
• Northern Zonal Office: New Delhi: 3731401. • Southern Zonal Office: Chennai: 5210347.
Website: www.unittrustofindia.com

NET ASSET VALUE Daily NAVs, sales & repurchase prices under US'95, Masterplus, Mastergain, Mastergrowth, Grandmaster, PEF, UTI-ETSP, UGS 10000, Growth Sectors Fund, Master Index Fund, Nifty Index Fund, Index Select Equity Fund, Money Market Fund, Bond Fund and G-Sec Fund. • Weekly NAVs, sales and repurchase prices under CRTS, CCP, RBP, ULIP and all MIPs launched after 1st July 1999. • Monthly sales and repurchase price for US'64 and all MIPs launched prior to 1st July 1999 i.e. up to MIP'99.

Constitution: UTI functions under provisions of UTI Act, 1963. **Risk Factors:** All investments in Mutual Funds and securities are subject to market risks and the NAV of the schemes may go up or down depending upon the factors and forces affecting the securities market. There can be no assurance that a scheme's investment objectives will be achieved. The past performance of the mutual funds is not necessarily indicative of future performance of the schemes. Please read the offer document of the schemes before investing.

FORTUNE 1500

For contemporary realities in Tea

it's
CONTEMPORARY
TEA TIME

Magazine that brings you the latest in tea—worldwide. News and views about tea and things related to it.

If tea interests you, you will find Tea Time irresistible.



For details, please contact

CONTEMPORARY TARGETT PRIVATE LIMITED
P.O. BOX NO. 14 CALCUTTA - 700 001.

AGI/CT 491

NOW SERVING AT OVER A MILLION LOCATIONS IN DELHI, NOIDA, GURGAON & FARIDABAD



"JUST CALL!"



Nirula's®

Corporate Office: L-Block,
Connaught Circus, New Delhi - 110001
Tel.: 3322419, Fax: 3324669
E-Mail: nirulas@nirula.com

Can't get away for a bite to eat?
Just call Nirula's and order anything from our scrumptious menu and we'll serve it promptly at a location that suits you best. **Your doorstep.**

Nirula's®
DIAL-A-MEAL
FREE DELIVERY SERVICE

DELHI

- * Bawa Potteries - 6136982, 6136474
- * Bungalow Road - 3978204, 3921655
- * Chanakyapuri - 6871712, 4671598
- * Connaught Circus - 3316694, 3326528
- * Defence Colony - 4621592, 4631029
- * East of Kailash - 6426678, 6451364
- * Greater Kailash-II - 6215914, 6215915
- * Karol Bagh - 5746050, 5816720
- * New Friends Colony - 6319799, 6319800
- * Okhla - 6812922, 6812271
- * Paschim Vihar - 5685556, 5688788
- * Preet Vihar - 2221599, 2450893
- * Rajindra Place - 5767444, 5762111
- * Vasant Kunj - 6132615, 6896807
- * Vasant Vihar - 6140450, 6147756
- * Vikaspuri - 5526000, 5527000

HARYANA

- * Faridabad - 91-5274603, 91-5274604
- * Gurgaon - 91-6333777, 91-6332589

UTTAR PRADESH

- * Noida - 91-4526513, 91-4526514
- * Noida Ph-II - 91-4568661, 91-4568662

Delivery Timings : 12:00 Noon to 11:00 p.m.

Visit our web site at : <http://www.nirula.com>

What do you want to build tomorrow ?



**Power projects ?
Chemical plants ?
Refineries ?
If you have a project,
SAIL has the steel.
And much more.**

SAIL Project Solutions

- Complete steel package
- On-time delivery
- Matching steel
- Supply at site
- Application consultancy
- Superior quality grades
- One-stop-shop for all your needs

Wide range of steels to meet wide range of project needs

Reinforcement Bars : High Strength Thermo-Mechanically treated, from 8 mm to 40 mm.
Now also available in High Corrosion Resistant Grade to withstand marine corrosion

Structurals :	Beams/Joints	Channels	Angles
	125x70x5 mm to 600x210x12 mm	75x40x4.8 mm to 400x100x8.8 mm	50x50x5 mm to 200x200x24 mm
Plates :	Thickness Width Length	5 to 120 mm 1000 to 3200 mm 4500 to 12500 mm	
HR Coils :	Thickness Width	1.6 mm to 16 mm 825 mm to 1730 mm	
Sheets :	Thickness Width Length	2 mm to 4 mm 1000 mm to 1400 mm 2500, 4000, 4500 mm	
SP Sheets/Coils & GC Sheets :	Thickness Width Length	Plain 0.3 mm to 1.6 mm 900, 1000, 1100, 1220 mm 2500, 3000 mm	Corrugated 0.5 mm to 1.6 mm 800, 885 mm 2500, 3000 mm

All the above mentioned items, Pipes (ERW and SW) and a wide range of other steel products are available to customer requirements - in Indian and foreign specifications



STEEL AUTHORITY OF INDIA LIMITED

More than just products, project partners

→ www.sail.co.in

SAIL Central Marketing Headquarters : Ispat Bhawan, 40, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta - 700 071, Phone : (033) 288 3810, 288 6151 Fax : (033) 288 6183, 288 2028, **CMO Regional Offices :**
Northern Region : Antriksh Bhavan, 10th Floor, 22 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi - 110 001, Phone : (011) 331 6017, 332 0334, 335 1175, Fax : (011) 372 1702, 372 2508 **North-Western Region :** SCO
57-59, Sector 17A, Chandigarh - 160 017, Phone : (0172) 70 9504-05, 70 9507-09, Fax : (0172) 70 9501 **Eastern Region :** Jeevan Sudha Building, 8th-9th Floors, 42-C, Jawaharlal Nehru Road,
Calcutta - 700 071, Phone : (033) 240 4323, 240 3524, 240 5650, Fax : (033) 280 2519, 247 2265 **Western Region :** The Metropolitan, Plot No. C-26/27, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra [E],
Mumbai - 400 051, Phone : (022) 654 1493, 654 1496-97, 654 2244, 654 2247, Fax : (022) 654 1452, 654 2042 **Central Region :** Arcade Silver 56, 3rd Floor, 1 New Palasia, Indore - 452 001, Phone : (0731)
54 3459 60, 43 4774, Fax : (0731) 43 2705, 43 2689, **Southern Region :** Ispat Bhawan, 2 Kodambakkam High Road, Chennai - 600 034, Phone : (044) 827 2091, 827 8166, Fax : (044) 827 1602.

Contd.12A.2090



Decades of Excellence in Sugar Industry

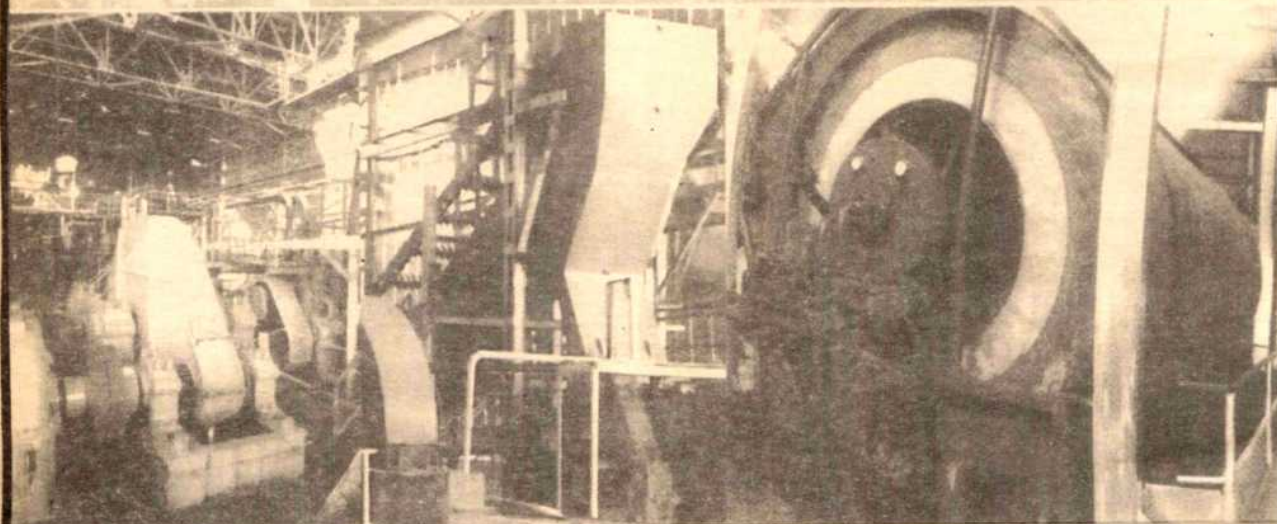
Triveni's eminence in the Sugar Industry is as old as the Indian Sugar Industry. Its 3 sugar mills in Khatauli, Deoband and Ramkola with a combined crushing capacity of 24000 TCD makes it a leading producer of sugar in India.

Its sugar machinery division has set up over 40 Turnkey sugar plants and expanded, modernised or rehabilitated over 25 sugar factories. The division has a creditable list of exports including a Turnkey 3000 TCD plant installation in Indonesia and major expansions in Uganda, Ethiopia and Bangladesh.

Besides the division has a vast installation base of Sugar machinery like Mills, Clarifier, Vacuum filters installed in various sugar mills world over.

The group has impressive manufacturing facilities at Bangalore and Mysore, both of which have ISO 9000 accreditation.

The focus of the group today is to create a niche for itself in high technology areas of sugar Industry for which, it has associated itself in a collaboration with Sugar Research Institute of Australia.



Triveni ENGINEERING & INDUSTRIES LIMITED
Head Office : "Kailash", 2nd Floor, 26, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-110 001
Tel. : 331-0021 (5 Lines) 3714460 (3 Lines) Fax : 3310117



**PARRYS – PIONEERS ON THE GROWTH
TRACK TO SERVE THE NATION'S NEEDS**

FARM INPUTS

ENNORE, RANIPET, THANE



SUGAR & ACETIC ACID

NELLIKUPPAM, PUGALUR, PUDUKOTTAI, PETTAVAITTALAI, THYAGAVALLI



SANITARYWARE

RANIPET, ALWAR, DEWAS



BIO PRODUCTS

NELLIKUPPAM, THYAGAVALLI

With Best Wishes

E.I.D. PARRY (INDIA) LTD

DARE HOUSE, 234 N.S.C. BOSE ROAD, CHENNAI 600 001

Tel.: 5340251 Telex: 041-6656 EID-IN Fax: 044-5340858

With Best Compliments

From



ICICI Limited

ICICI Towers
Bandra-Kurla Complex
Mumbai 400 051, India

Website: <http://www.icici.com>

INNOVATIVE PRODUCT RANGE

From

TROPICANA TELECOM

- **SPREAD SPECTRUM RADIO-** *High Band – Width State – of – the – Art Radios for connectivity between two locations distanced 5 Km to 40 Km, capable of working even in intense radio interference environment*
- **UPS-** *World's First State – of – the – Art INTERNAL UPS (Fits inside any PC).*
- **'M' SEC-** *High grade Secrecy Device for TELEPHONE and FAX Communication (Light weight and Portable size for carriage)*
- **CARE PHONE-** *An Innovative Hot – Line for Immediate Help Care and Peace Of Mind (Makes use of existing Telephone Line)*

For products and execution of projects, please contact –

TROPICANA TELECOM

(A Division of Tropicana Enterprises Pvt Ltd)
C-37, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi 110 048

Phone 6452248 / 49, 6291931 / 32, Fax 6292738 Mobile 09810022049 / 9811091736
E-mail tropicanatel@mantraonline.com

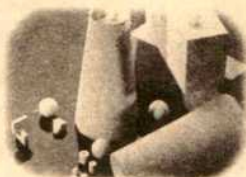
An Indian Classic



... the flicker of a glance...
 an expression without words...
 a blur of movements – that sets spirits soaring,
 feet tapping to the sound of music –
 the rhythm of the art –
 Bharat Natyam.
 An Indian classical dance form.



Likewise – another modern India classic. ACC.
 Virtuoso performance – over 60 years.
 No 1 in cement in India,
 second-largest cement company
 in the developing world. A leader – since 1936



breaking new ground – not just in cement
 but also in high-tech refractories
 and special products.

State-of-the-art research facilities
 comprehensive, in-house –
 the only one-of-its-kind in India.
 Plus consultancy services – to process industries –
 from concept to commissioning.
 ACC. Moving to a new rhythm – the 21 st century.

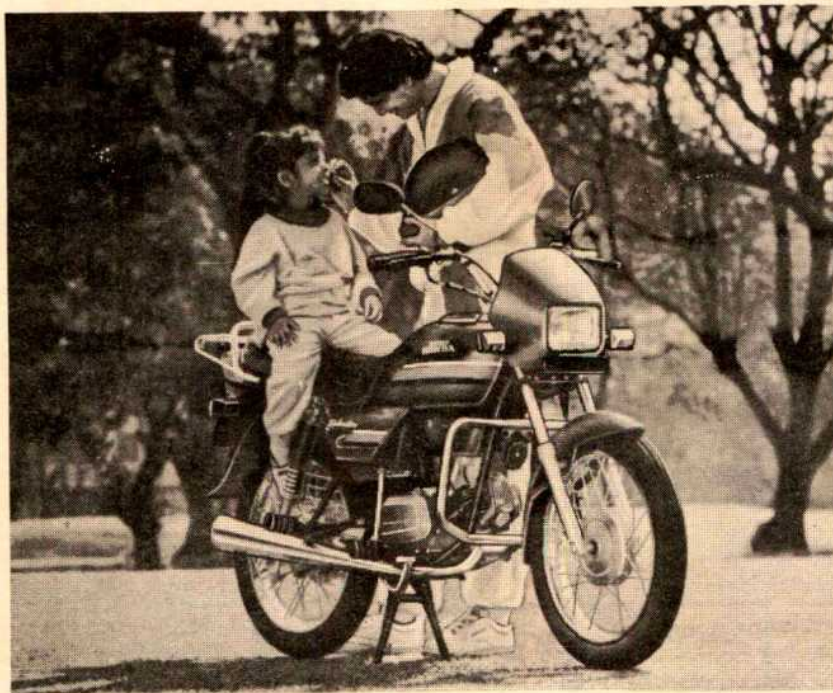


ACC The Associated
 Cement Companies
 Limited

times change, our values don't

Cement House 121 Maharshi Karve Road, Mumbai 400 020 (India)
 Tel: 2039122 • Telex: 1182837 • Fax: (91-22) 2080076.

CARING TODAY FOR YOUR TOMORROW.



Our children, our future, need the utmost care. And at Hero Honda we care.
For you, your family and the environment.

Hero Honda's superior 4-stroke technology and its high fuel-efficiency makes it
one of India's most environment-friendly motorcycles.

Little wonder, then, that today over one and a half million proud Hero Honda
owners are making an impact on our environment across the country. Ensuring a
brighter and a pollution-free tomorrow for the future generation.

Ride a Hero Honda. And show the world that you care.



**HERO
HONDA**
Leading the way

Maadhyam/HH/6558/97



Bank of Madura

The bank with a difference!

- User friendly All in One Savings Account with interest of FD, flexibility of SB and with an OD facility
- Anywhere Banking in 21 branches, more to follow
- High Speed Funds Transfer Scheme
- Loan Schemes for employees of Institutions
- Fast track finance for Doctors
- Tailor-made schemes for Executives/Traders
- Custom made loan schemes for Engineers, Architects and CAs
- Bank of Madura ANZ Credit card: more power and more convenience
- 6 branches with ISO 9002 certification

Contact any of our branches for details.

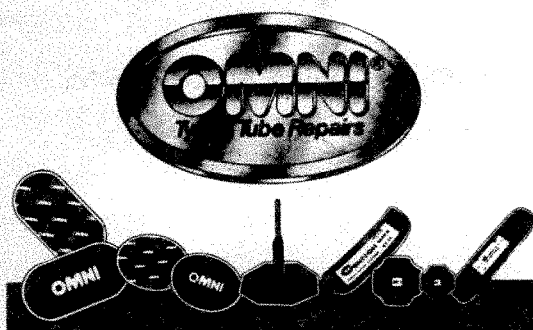


Bank of Madura Ltd.
Banking by Design

Central Office: KARUMUTTU NILAYAM, 758, Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002

visit us @www.bankofmadura.com

**When you want the best
in tyre and tube repairs,
ask for it by name.**



**India's largest - selling
tyre and tube repair systems**



*Nobody is a
patch on us.*

**UNIPATCH
Rubber Limited**

10, Community Centre, Saket,
New Delhi-110 017.
Ph. : 660379, 665536

**A joint venture with
Tech Rubber, USA.**

6965535

With Best Compliments from

SPAN HOLDINGS

SPAN HOLDINGS PVT. LTD.

Corporate Office:

220, Okhla Industrial Estate, Phase III, New Delhi 110020

Ph: 6836476, 6836478 Fax: 6840878

E-mail: span@giasdl 1.vsnl.net.in

Registered Office:

G-15, Maharani Bagh, New Delhi 110065

new **Godrej**
shaving cream
 for a
smoother,
closer shave



NEW
ATTRACTIVE
LAMITUBE

Now with extra lather for a closer shave. And lanolin which makes the razor glide across your skin for a smooth shaving experience

Maduca-G-956 H

World Class Health Care

Cardiac care services by a
team of world class doctors
Other medicare services of
International Standards

- Coronary Bypass Surgery
- Heart Valve Surgery
- Heart Transplant
- Congenital Heart Surgery
(Heart Problems since birth)
- Vascular Surgery
- Neurology and Neuro Surgery
- Surgical Gastroenterology
- Nephrology and Urology
- Orthopaedics
- Cancer Treatments



Apollo Hospitals

Chennai : Ph. : (091) (044) 8293333, Fax : (091) (044) 8234429

Hyderabad : Ph. : (091) (040) 3607777, Fax : (091) (040) 3608050

Delhi : Ph. : (091) (011) 6925858, Fax : (091) (011) 6823629

e-mail : ahel@vsnl.com Web : <http://www.apollohospitals.com>



India's
largest selling
and most
exported fan

Ab PSPO kaun nahi jaanta?



ORIENT
PSPO

The measure which the whole world treasures

Mudra : OF : 111

With Best Compliments

from



APEEJAY-SURRENDRAGROUP

Tea, shipping, hotels, steel,
real estate, finance and
international trade

Pragati Bhawan, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi 110001
Telephone: 336 1193 Fax: 374 7123



INDIA BOOK HOUSE LIMITED

Estd. 1952

The largest distributors of books and magazines in India

412 Tulsiani Chambers, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021. Tel 91 22 2840165 Fax 91 22 2835099 Email info@ibhworld.com

MUMBAI • DELHI • CALCUTTA • CHENNAI • BANGALORE • HYDERABAD
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • PUNE • AHMEDABAD • CHANDIGARH

**VALUE FOR
THE READER.
A TRADITION WITH
THE LEADER.**



For over 75 years now, The Hindustan Times Group has accurately gauged the depths of its readers' intellectual needs. And catered to them by providing complete news, information and entertainment in the best journalistic tradition. That's why The Hindustan Times Group has touched a chord in its readers at various moments in their lives. And that's also why The Hindustan Times Group is recognised as the leader today. Because value for the reader has always been a tradition with the leader.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
LEADERSHIP - ITS ALL ABOUT IMPACT

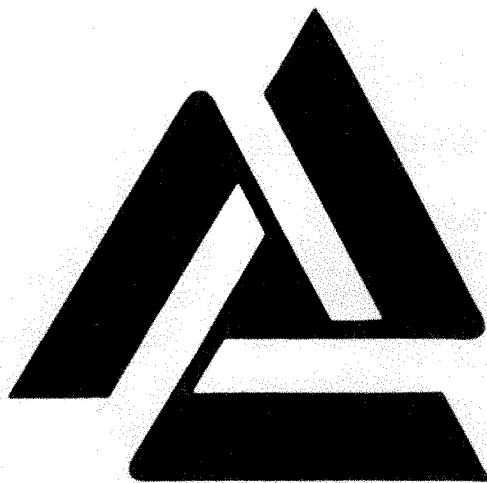
THE HINDUSTAN TIMES.

HINDUSTAN.

KADAMBINI.

NANDAN.

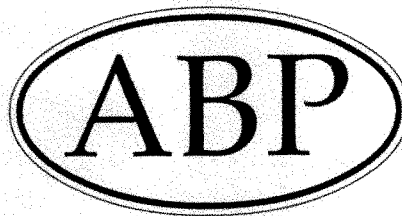
IL&FS



INFRASTRUCTURE LEASING &
FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED

With Best Compliments

from



ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA LIMITED

6, Prafulla Sarkar Street, Calcutta 700 001
Phone: 221 6600, 237 4880 Fax: 225 3240, 225 3241

Fab India Overseas Ltd

14, N Block Market, Greater Kailash Part I
New Delhi 110 048

Tel: 6212184, 6212185, 6465497 Main Shop: 6212183
Fabrics: 6445293 N-5 Shop 6445293 N-7 Shop 6212761

10 L.S.C. Nelson Mandela Road
Vasant Kunj
New Delhi 110 070
Tel: 6899775, 6899778

54, 17th Main, IIInd Block
Koramangala
Bangalore 560 034
Tel: 5520004, 5532070

RETAIL AND EXPORT OF HOME FURNISHINGS



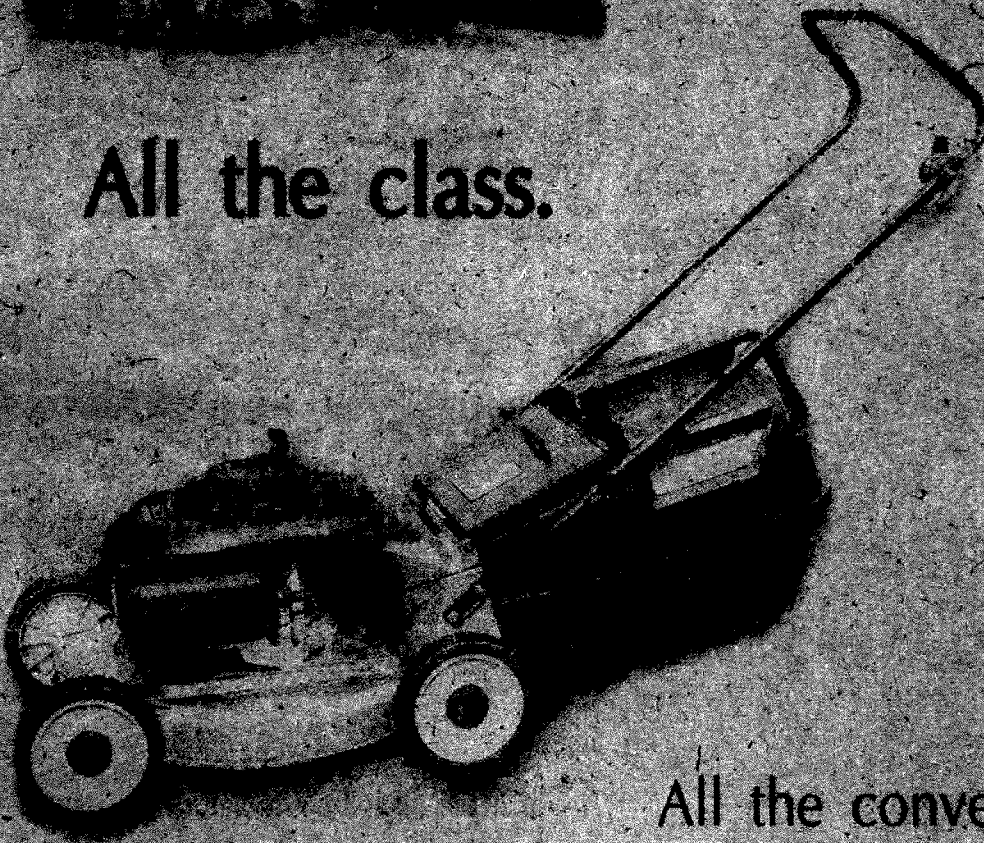
Ideal for Farm Houses, Golf Courses, Factory Premises, Campuses & other Institutions. In fact for any good looking green.

HONDA

presents

LAWN MOWER

All the class.



All the convenience.

HONDA Mowers are sold and serviced in India exclusively by

HONDA
POWER PRODUCTS

For any other information, contact - Marketing Department
HONDA S&I POWER PRODUCTS LTD.
5th Floor, Kirti Mahal, 19 Rajendra Place, New Delhi - 110 008
Phones: (011) 5739103/04/05, 5723528, 5723718
Fax: 91-11-5752218, 5753652

Easy starting

Clean breathing

O.H.V. Fuel efficient engine

CENTUM

seminar

THE MONTHLY SYMPOSIUM POST BOX 338 NEW DELHI 110001

Founder Editors RAJ & ROMESH THAPAR

A journal which seeks to reflect through free discussion, every shade of Indian thought and aspiration. Each month, a single problem is debated by writers belonging to different persuasions. Opinions expressed have ranged from Janata to Congress, from Sarvodaya to Communist to Independent. And

the non-political specialist too has voiced his views. In this way it has been possible to answer a real need of today, to gather the facts and ideas of this age and to help thinking people arrive at a certain degree of cohesion and clarity in facing the problems of economics, of politics, of culture

Publisher MALVIKA SINGH

Editor TEJBIR SINGH

Consulting Editor HARSH SETHI

Circulation N.K. PILLAI

2-46 Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi-110001; Ph 3316534; Fax 3316445; E-mail seminar@vsnl.com; Website www.india-seminar.com
Single copy: Rs25 Yearly: Rs250; £35; \$50 Three year: Rs700; £80; \$125 Reproduction of material prohibited unless permitted.

NEXT MONTH: CHANGING MARKETPLACE

497

INDIA 2000

a symposium on

the year that was



symposium participants

- 24 **INDIAN POVERTY IDEOLOGY AND EVIDENCE**
Surjit S Bhalla President Oxus Research and Investments, Delhi
- 28 **PROTECTIONISM NO SOLUTION**
T N Ninan, Editor, 'Business Standard', Delhi
- 32 **WHY WE NEED LAW REFORM**
Bibek Debroy, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies Delhi
- 38 **REFORM POLITICAL PARTIES FIRST**
Pratap Bhanu Mehta Associate Professor of Government and of Social Studies Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
- 42 **POLITICS OF REORDERING CHAOS**
Harish Khare Associate Editor, 'The Hindu', Delhi
- 46 **BJP UP FOR GRABS**
Swapan Dasgupta, Deputy Editor, 'India Today' Delhi
- 49 **ONE PARTY, MANY VOICES**
Mahesh Rangarajan independent researcher and political analyst, Delhi
- 53 **TWO PARTIES, TWO FACES?**
Vir Sanghvi Editor 'The Hindustan Times' Delhi
- 59 **CLUELESS IN KASHMIR**
Praveen Swami, Chief of Bureau 'Frontline', Mumbai
- 64 **UTTARAKHAND'S CHALLENGE**
Pradeep Kumar Professor of Political Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh
- 69 **MARGINALISATION OF PUNJAB**
Surinder S Jodhka, Department of Sociology, Panjab University, Chandigarh
- 75 **TWO DECADES OF LEFT RULE**
Rajat Ray, Chief of News Bureau, Ananda Bazar Patrika, Calcutta
- 81 **TOO MANY TO CARE**
Meera Chatterjee, Senior Social Development Specialist, The World Bank Delhi
- 86 **CHILDREN, WORK AND EDUCATION**
Vimala Ramachandran Education Resource Unit, Jaipur
- 90 **END OF CRICKET AS WE KNEW IT**
Rudrangshu Mukherjee, Editor Editorial Pages 'The Telegraph' Calcutta
- 92 **PARTITION AND MEMORY**
Urvashi Butalia, author and Co-publisher, Kali for Women Delhi
- 95 **SINGING A NATION INTO BEING**
Rukmini Bhaya Nair, Professor of Linguistics and English IIT, Delhi
- 101 **AND THEN THERE WAS THE MARKET**
P Samath, journalist Mumbai
- 104 **BACKPAGE**
- 107 **INDEX**
- COVER**
Designed by Akila Seshasayee

Indian poverty: ideology and evidence

SURJIT S BHALLA

IDEOLOGY plays an important part in the formulation of policies to attack poverty, and in the study of evidence on poverty. On both counts, its role in the removal of poverty in India has been questionable.

Policies to remove poverty have been state intensive. Poverty in India is defined as per person consumption expenditure of less than Rs 51 per month (1973 prices) or close to Rs 400 per month at current (year 2000) prices. For a family of five this translates into Rs 24,000 per year, which is only half the level at which Indian citizens pay taxes. There are good arguments to suggest that both the first taxation level and the poverty line in India be raised by about 25%.

What the poverty line should be is dictated partly by the values pertaining to redistribution and partly by the 'surplus' income in society. This is fair. What is questionable are the policies derived from this goal, policies that are generally a license for state inefficiency and state corruption. For example, there is an elaborate machinery to procure foodgrains from farmers, store them, move them across states, and sell them in ration shops at 'subsidized' prices. This elaborate procedure ensures considerable leakage and corruption, and leads to the absurd

reality that at present there are about 20 million tons of grains rotting in government godowns.

The ideology behind these policies is one of individuals articulating them knowing 'better', which gets translated into the state knowing better. The ideology is one of '*loco parentis*', e.g. a parent is needed to guide the itinerant peasant. It is this same logic that leads some to proclaim that we should preserve the *adivasis* lifestyle, even if it means keeping them permanently in poverty. Have the *adivasis* ever been asked whether they want their children to go through the same lifestyle as themselves – or do they desire ever increasing opportunities and incomes, as the rest of us on this planet?

There is little logic to the plethora of policies – ration shops, food for work, fertilizer subsidies – that masquerade as policies meant for the poor. This is where ideology is present in large 'in the name of the poor' quantities. Given that the goal of poverty reduction and equal opportunity is universally accepted, and politically correct, it should follow that only those policies should be adopted which maximize redistribution to the poor at minimum cost.

One such efficient policy is income transfers. This policy is simple – after identifying the poor, they are given a cash transfer to bring them at par with the poverty line. The local

* I would like to thank Arindom Mookerjee for excellent research assistance. See www.oxusresearch.com for articles on poverty and related subjects.

panchayats can be involved in both the identification of the poor and in the estimation of their incomes. The poor would be more than anxious to assert their rights and demand their due. Leakages will be minimal, as will corruption.

Not that this policy will eliminate corruption, for example, the panchayat could bribe the poor to show a larger than actual poverty gap in order to receive a kickback. The Government of India has conducted various National Sample Surveys (NSS) since 1951. These surveys contain large amounts of information on poverty in a particular region, and its evolution over time. These village/district estimates can be used to cross-check estimates provided by panchayats.

The likelihood of this simple policy being adopted is low, all for the simple reason that vested interests (the bureaucracy, rich farmers, politicians) will lose considerably if the present system is junked. The gainers will be the poor, and they have little lobbying power.

Ideology also pervades the assessment of the number of poor in India, and what policies have, or have not, been successful in reducing poverty. Exaggeration has its due place in literature, but policies should not be based on hysterical examination of data.

The most egregious example of such behaviour is that of the novelist Arundhati Roy in her 'concern for the poor' pamphlet, *The Greater Common Good*. In it she claims that more than 50 million people have been displaced by the construction of large dams in India. Normally, outpourings of novelists do not deserve serious attention, but if they are of the right ideology, they can even influence the outpourings of so-called objective commissions of inquiry, e.g. the World Commission on Dams (WCD).

The WCD's report is the latest example of 'public policy via fiction'. This exhaustive, and otherwise thorough, report is flawed by its overtures towards those who want to exaggerate the number of people displaced. The WCD states that the 'overall level of physical displacement could range from 40 to 80 million'. Another statement, strewn throughout the report, and starting from the Chair's preface, is that there are more than 45,000 large dams (defined as those above 15 m or with a reservoir volume of above 3 million cubic meters) in the world. So the average number of people displaced by large dams is 1333 (60 million divided by 45000).

For India and China, the Commission states the following: 'Thus, in India and China together, large dams could have displaced between 26-58 million people between 1950 and 1990'. China, according to the report, has close to 23000 dams and India 4200. So the average displaced in these two populous countries is 1544 per large dam, excluding India and China, the number displaced per dam is close to 1125. So the two populous countries—India and China—displace about 40% more people per dam than non-populous countries. The aggregate statistics have a ring of plausibility, and consistency to them.

But in an apparent seizure of ideology, the WCD genuflects to the 'demands' of Indian 'analysts'. The WCD break-up between the two most populous countries, India and China, is revealing. India, with 4200 dams has displaced 16-38 million people, China, with six times as many dams—23000—has half as many displaced, 10-20 million! Nowhere in the report does the Commission attempt to explain this (ideological) discrepancy. Or the fact that if the Indian upper estimate is applied to China, then there

would be about 226 million Chinese displaced by dams—or a third of the rural population of China.

If you believe that statistic, you will also believe that 56 million have been displaced by large dams in India—a statistic cited by Arundhati Roy in her recent polemic on globalization (Roy, 2000). The India Country Study from where Roy ostensibly gets her ideological statistic, does not contain any reference to 56 million.

As discussed in detail in Bhalla (1999a, 1999b) and Bhalla-Mookerjee (2000), the likely figure for people displaced per dam in India is about 1360, a number strikingly close to the world average figure given by WCD. Note that the WCD figure for displacement by *all the dams in the entire world* is close to Roy's ideologically exaggerated figure for India alone.

The controversy over the displaced numbers raises the question as to why do people exaggerate with such intensity. The why is outside the domain of this paper—and more in the domain of psychiatrists wanting to discover how different people cope with the 'guilt' associated with *not* being poor. It has been mentioned here to alert readers, and researchers, to the possibility that the poverty numbers thrown up by different analysts may have an ideological bias. Perhaps 'in the name of the poor' studies should carry a statutory warning: 'Reportage of "facts" may be injurious to the truth.'

An analogous, and perhaps ideological, problem exists with the 'research' studies on the extent of absolute poverty in India. The poverty line in India is defined according to the 'base' year, 1973, and defined as monthly per capita consumption below Rs 49 in rural areas and Rs 56.6 in urban areas. Table 1 reports the 'official' poverty lines for the differ-

ent years, the 1973 levels have been updated using separate deflators for rural and urban areas, and the national poverty line is obtained by aggregating the data for the urban and rural population in the different years

The table reports the percentage of the population that is poor in each of the years – this percentage is referred to as the ‘head count ratio’ or HCR. The table reports three different estimates of the poverty ratio – NSS7, NSS30 and national accounts modified (NAM). NSS7 and NSS30 refer to the National Sample Survey estimates, and NAM refers to an estimate obtained from national accounts data (For a description of the NAM methodology, see Bhalla 2000f)

National accounts data yield estimates of mean consumption, the NSS data yield estimates of the *distribution* of consumption. Together, the two sets of data can yield ‘reliable’ estimates of trends in poverty. Indeed, until 1993, this was precisely the approach taken by the Government of India. For reasons that are not entirely clear, the GOI set up an expert group under the chairmanship of the late eminent scholar, D T Lakdavalu. The officially stated reason for an expert study was as follows: ‘A number of methodological issues have been raised in respect of the estimates of poverty released by the Planning Commission. In view of the importance of poverty eradication as a social objective, wide-ranging references to the incidence of poverty in discussions relating to social problems as also their use in allocation of funds for poverty alleviation programmes, it was thought that all the issues relating to the estimation of poverty could be considered afresh by an expert group’ (Page 1, first paragraph, EG-GOI, 1993)

In 1993, the group came out with its report entitled ‘Report of the Expert

Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor’ (EG-GOI, 1993). One of the most significant policy conclusions contained in this report was the recommendation that national accounts data no longer be used for adjusting mean survey estimates, i.e. the National Sample Survey be used, *in toto*, to generate results on poverty trends.

It is likely that this single decision has been responsible for the considerable amount of noise, and ideological misinformation, that now exists about poverty in India. Table 1 reports several estimates of poverty in India. Some idea of the divergence between the official survey data (NSS) and national accounts data (NAS) can be gleaned from the fact

that in 1973, the survey data reported aggregate expenditures which were three-fourths of the national average as given by the national accounts, in 1999, the survey is only able to capture 58% of national income. All incomes, including that of the poor, are understated in 1999, and understated by a large amount. Even if 1973 is taken as the ‘true’ figure, it still emerges that in 1999, with the same understatement as 1973, survey consumption expenditures are 25% lower than ‘actual’, and poverty about 20 percentage points higher.

The data reported in Table 1 illustrates the huge divergence in poverty estimates obtained by various researchers. The latest NSS data pertains to July-December 1999. The official

TABLE 1

Year	Different Estimates of Poverty in India						
	Poverty Line (Rs/month)	Urban Pop (% of total)	Mean per capita expn per month		Head Count Index		
			NSS	NAS	NSS 1	NSS 2	NAS
1972	42	22	48	64	46		
1973	51	22	57	75	48		
1977	63	23	75	102	52	–	45
1983	106	24	125	190	45	–	31
1987	136	26	182	266	39	–	29
1993	227	28	331	526	36	–	17
1993 (D-G)				34	–		
1993 (D-T)				29	–		
1994	253	29	425	602	37	22	13
1995	279	29	485	679	36	18	12
1997	308	30	533	832	37	20	7
1998 (Jan-June)	330	31	550	939	42	23	7
1999	369	31	594	1024	27	24	6

Notes

* NSS 1 refers to the 30-day recall method of estimating food consumption, and NSS 2 refers to the preferred, 7-day recall period for estimating monthly food consumption. Prior to 1994-95, all NSS data used the 30-day recall period.

* NAS refers to the author’s own estimates using per capita consumption from National Accounts data and distribution from NSS. National Accounts data have been adjusted for likely exclusion and under-estimation of income of rich households.

* Head Count Index is the per cent of population estimated to be absolutely poor according to the poverty line reported in column 2.

* D-T refers to estimates in Deaton-Tarozzi (1999), D-G refers to estimates by Dubey-Gangopadhyay (1998).

* For NCAER (MISH) data, see Natarajan et al., ‘Economic Reforms and Poverty Alleviation: A tale of two surveys’, 20 July 2000.

estimate of poverty for this period is between 24 and 27% or around 240 to 270 million. Note that this very same data source indicated that only 18% of the population was poor four years ago – in other words, poverty has gone up substantially in the last five years! The NAM (modified national accounts) estimate for 1999 is that only 6% of the population was poor in 1999. The NCAER estimate for poverty in India in 1997 is 17%.

Note also that both NCAER and Deaton-Tarozzi obtain identical estimates for the poor in India in 1993 – 29%. Per capita consumption has grown by about 30% between 1993 and 1999. On a conservative estimate, this growth probably resulted in poverty being reduced by about two-thirds of the rise in income, i.e. 20% (See Bhalla, 2000d and Bhalla, 2000f for details pertaining to the estimation of the trickle down elasticity, i.e. how much poverty goes down with increase in income). A conservative forecast of the non-NSS 1993 estimates of poverty would suggest that poverty in India today is in the single digits, i.e. less than 100 million. This number is close to that yielded by the modified national accounts method – a method, incidentally, which was used till 1996 by the Government of India.

References

- Bhalla, Surjit S. (2000a), Trends in World Income Distribution and Poverty: Some New, Some Different, Estimates. Paper Presented at Princeton University, 3 October 2000.
- _____. (2000b), 'Bis-mil-mufli: In the name of the poor', *Business Standard*, 16 September 2000.
- _____. (2000c), 'Why We Don't "Grow" Poor', *Business Standard*, 22 July 2000.
- _____. (2000d), FAQ's on Poverty in India. Paper Presented at a seminar in Delhi School of Economics, 20 July 2000.
- _____. (2000e), Trends in World Poverty Ideology and Research, Paper presented at IMF, 28 June 2000.
- _____. (2000f), 'Growth and Poverty in India – Myth and Reality' in Govinda Rao (ed.), *Poverty and Public Policy: Essays in Honour of Raja Chelliah* (forthcoming).
- _____. (2000g), 'World Bank – We have a Poverty Problem' *Economic Times*, 18 January 2000.
- _____. (1999a), 'Don't Confuse me With Facts', *Indian Express*, 27 September 1999.
- _____. (1999b), 'Going Wrong With Figures in a Big Dam Way' *Indian Express*, 6 September 1999.
- _____. and Ravinder Kaur (1999), 'Poverty in India – Towards New Policies' in S. Gangopadhyay (ed.), *Poverty in India*, Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, December 1999.
- _____. and A. Mookerjee (2000), Big Dam Development: Facts, Figures and Pending Issues. Paper to be presented at forthcoming conference on Water Development and Poverty Alleviation, Ahmedabad, 29-31 January 2001.
- Deaton, Angus and A. Tarozzi (1999), Prices and Poverty in India. Mimeo, Princeton University, December 1999.
- Dubey, A. and S. Gangopadhyay (1998), Counting the Poor: Where are the Poor in India? Sarvekshana Analytical Report No. 1, Department of Statistics, Government of India, February 1998.
- Expert Group, Government of India (1993), Report of The Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor. Perspective Planning Division, Planning Commission, July 1993.
- Natarajan, I. D. Lal and R. Mohan (2000), Economic Reforms and Poverty Alleviation: A Tale of Two Surveys. Paper presented at a seminar in Delhi School of Economics, 20 July 2000.
- NCAER, Volume 1, Issue 2 (2000), 'Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic and Adjustment Policies' (MIMAP)–India, January 2000.
- NCAER, Volume 1, Issue 1 (1999a), 'Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic and Adjustment Policies' (MIMAP)–India, October 1999.
- NCAER, (1999b), *India Human Development Report of the Nineties*. Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Roy, A. (2000), The Reincarnation of Rumpelstiltskin' *Outlook*, 27 November 2000.
- Roy, A. (1999), 'The Greater Common Good', first published in *Outlook*, and then released as a booklet by India Book Distributors, 1999.
- World Commission on Dams (2000), *Dams and Development – A New Framework for Decision-Making*, EarthScan Publications, November 2000.

Protectionism no solution

T N NINAN

THE new year that has just begun will mark the 10th anniversary of the start of serious economic reform. China at the same landmark (1988) was already a booming economy, ratcheting up a sustained annual growth rate of 9 per cent. Prime Minister Vajpayee has now set his sights on a similar target for India. But while the political spirit is willing, the business flesh is weak.

Indeed, the mood in business circles at the end of the old year was one of doubt and worry, if not downright pessimism. The business confidence surveys by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) showed a drop in optimism through successive quarters. The Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) periodic business outlook surveys reflected the same picture. And, of course, the statistics on non-oil imports, on customs and excise revenues collection, and on industrial production, all showed an unmistakable loss of momentum by the middle of the calendar year, as did non-food commer-

cial bank fund flows to business a little later.

It didn't help that the monsoon had been less than perfect, that Gujarat and Rajasthan would face severe drought problems next summer as a consequence, and that the year's harvest would not yield much by way of agricultural growth. Naturally, everyone quickly downgraded growth forecasts for GDP.

The stock market reflected this all-round pessimism, especially after the dotcom bubble burst in April or shortly thereafter. If one looks beyond the yo-yo movements of the share index, the stark fact is that the price-earning ratios of the majority of listed companies are below 10. Indeed, the only companies that seemed to enjoy a modicum of investor confidence were those engaged in software, consumer softs and pharmaceuticals. But even in consumer softs, the giant in the field (Hindustan Lever) saw its sustained out-performance become a thing of the past as sales became flat.

and the company's share price got hammered as a consequence

If the investing community was signalling a lack of confidence in the future of most of Indian manufacturing, the manufacturers themselves were saying the same thing. The cry this time was China, that imports from China were swamping India, that there was large-scale dumping going on because the price of finished goods was much less than that of the raw materials used, and so on.

Reports surfaced in the newspapers of Chinese bicycles, electric fans, batteries, calculators and much else selling at between 30 and 60 per cent of domestic prices. Indeed, at a meeting with businessmen which the finance minister had called in order to discuss the loss of economic momentum, a secretary to the government resorted to the dramatic gimmick of fishing a Chinese pencil battery from his pocket and holding it up for all to see. He got everyone's attention with the announcement that the battery was available in the Indian market at less than a third of the price of its Indian rivals.

It took a while for economists to fish out the trade statistics, and put a macro-economic perspective to the undeniable fact of Chinese imports having begun in a more serious way than was the case till now. And the numbers gave no cause for alarm. Yes, imports from China had gone up, but by less than India's exports to China. So the trade balance happens to be in India's favour. Besides, imports from China were only a tiny fraction of the country's total imports. Then, consumers began discovering that the life of a Chinese battery was much less than that of an Indian alternative, so there was a quality issue as well (in the case of at least some Chinese products).

Farmers meanwhile faced their own problems, because of a downturn in the commodity price cycle in sectors like rubber and edible oils. So they joined the growing chorus for protection from imported competition. The government responded with a series of *swadeshi* measures. Customs duties were jacked up sharply for rubber and palm oil, among other agricultural products. Duty levels were tweaked for some industrial products as well, and a series of non-tariff barriers were sought to be put in place: the imposition of local standards on imported products, stipulations on which ports importers had to use, and so on. Some of these were legitimate, and in fact have been mandated by Indian law for some time, but the government's intention clearly was to try and slow down imports by putting bureaucratic hurdles in place. India has also become far more active in imposing anti-dumping duties on imported items.

It isn't clear that these measures will have the desired results. But businessmen justified their call for protection by pointing to the several cost and other disadvantages of locating manufacturing operations in India. In many states, for instance, electricity costs upwards of Rs 6 per unit for industry, which is nearly twice as high as it should be and is a result of extreme cross-subsidisation, since farmers get their power either free or at hefty subsidies. Similarly, railway freight rates are much too high, because the railways use these to subsidise passenger fares. Trucking is expensive too, since the poor road conditions, octroi charges and delays at check posts raise dramatically the cost of moving goods.

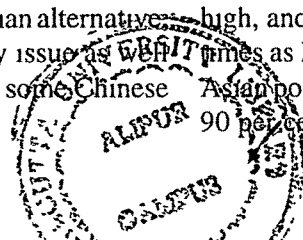
Equally, Indian port charges are high, and ship turnaround takes five times as long as it does in many East Asian ports. By one yardstick, nearly 90 per cent of Indian port and dock

workers are surplus, as are one-third of the 1.5 million railway employees. The result of all this is that shipping rates from East Asia to Europe are lower than they are from even western Indian ports to Europe. Then, of course, there is the lack of operational flexibility imposed on business by the rigid labour laws, not one of which has been changed in any way so far.

Taken together, according to an assessment by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Indian manufacturers suffer a cost disadvantage of about 17 per cent, compared to manufacturers in other countries. And (which is the point of outlining the whole issue), it focuses attention directly on the fact that, nearly a decade after economic reforms began, so many key areas in the Indian economy still remain unreformed and inefficient.

Much the same thing can be said about agriculture, which faces a new kind of crisis because the wheat and rice mountain has now become as big as 45 million tonnes, while the sugar mountain is nearly 15 million tonnes. India now has as much of sugar as it should have of wheat! And neither can be exported without incurring huge losses, either because product quality is not acceptable (India does not produce what the rest of the world recognises as refined sugar) or because India's costs are far too high.

One reason why those costs are so high became clear through the kharif harvesting season, when farmers in one state after another agitated for a relaxation of the quality norms for public procurement. Under the pressure of state governments ruled by parties that are part of the ruling coalition in New Delhi, the Centre eventually gave in. So, the grim fact was that a decade after reforms began, India remains a high-cost economy.



Looked at another way, these problems are reflected in the various international rankings that now come out every year. There is the competitiveness ranking, the ranking on corruption, the ranking on the basis of the human development index, and so on. And it is instructive that in virtually every such international ranking, India shows up in the bottom quarter of countries. There is no getting away from the fact that this is a severely under-performing system.

At one level, the solutions to these problems are not profoundly difficult. If the system as a whole is 17 per cent more inefficient than, say, the countries in East Asia, a 17 per cent import duty should be able to act as an effective neutraliser in terms of providing a level playing field in the domestic market. In point of fact, the average customs duty level in India remains among the highest in the world, and currently is in excess of 25 per cent, there is even talk of raising the peak duty rate yet again. There will be a few products where the protection level is lower, but not many, and not by much.

Exports present a trickier problem, because the only way to provide a system-wide corrective to a cost disadvantage (so that you don't have to pick and choose individual manufacturer-beneficiaries) is to push down the external value of the rupee till it reflects the cost disadvantages of operating out of India. The problem of course is that, since the rupee's value is no longer determined by the RBI and is a result of market forces, no such solution can be introduced by fiat. However, the RBI certainly has enough influence in a thin market to push the rupee down, if it really wants to. The political problem of course is that no finance minister wants to face the flak for downgrading the currency, since the strength of the currency is

still seen by many as reflecting the strength of the system.

In point of fact, if the rupee could be pushed down from Rs 46.75 against the dollar, to about Rs 54 (and admittedly, this would not be easy), importers would not need the extra duty protection, while exporters would have got their price advantage. One suspects that the 17% cost disadvantage figure put out by FICCI is an exaggeration. Most exporters and domestic players would be perfectly happy if the rupee dropped to 50 against the dollar (which would provide a correction of less than 7 per cent). This isn't the easiest thing to achieve, but equally, it isn't impossible either.

One suspects, though, that even if this were done, you would still have exporters and domestic players complaining about the lack of a level playing field. And with today's standard excuses for failure having run out, the real issues would start surfacing. First on the list would be the lack of economies of scale, which would include the continuing problem of whole sectors of industrial activity being reserved for small-scale industry. In point of fact, this only excludes large domestic players, it does not exclude the large international players, because as part of the deal with the US under the aegis of the World Trade Organisation, the last policy restrictions on imports have to go by the coming April.

In anticipation of imported competition, the government has recently de-reserved garments, as part of a textile policy package, but hundreds of other sectors remain reserved. But equally, the scale issue goes well beyond the issue of reservations, because most Indian manufacturing operations remain cottage enterprises when viewed from a global platform. Thailand has sugar factories on a scale

that no one is able to dream of in India. China's TV companies dwarf Indian set manufacturers. Korea's Posco is vastly bigger than any Indian steel mill.

Second would come the issue of quality, allied to which is the issue of access to current technology and effective marketing and branding. While Indian manufacturers are shy of discussing these issues, the fact remains that a great deal of very shoddy material gets pushed into the Indian market. Many Indian steel producers still turn out uneven quality. Indian trucks are not as contemporary as they could be. Many Indian companies still use highly polluting technologies, or technology that requires excessive material inputs (thereby raising costs), or have work practices that do not achieve maximum productivity. All of these affect competitiveness, and solutions lie with the manufacturers, not the government.

It is true that the last four years of depressed demand have forced many companies to address these issues in the pursuit of sheer survival, so that companies like Tisco have bench-marked themselves globally on cost and taken the hard decisions. But a great many others have not. When this is coupled with the traditional weakness of Indian businesses, in the area of marketing and branding, the prospect of competition can be pretty daunting. Which explains the cry for protection, for some way to keep out imports. The underlying lack of confidence is reflected in the poor stock market valuation of Indian manufacturing companies.

But protection is no solution, unless it were to go to the absurd lengths of the past, lengths that are now not permitted under the new trading rules. For instance, domestic industries that use high-cost Indian rubber as raw

material will have to face competition from foreign rivals who don't. The solution is not higher duty levels for downstream products as well, but improving the productivity standards on Indian rubber plantations so that they can match Malaysian costs. If Indian fertiliser units that use naphtha as their feedstock produce urea at fully twice the cost of imported fertiliser, no solution is possible to the downstream problem of a burgeoning fertiliser subsidy, other than to phase out the use of naphtha as quickly as possible. And this could mean shutting down a great many plants.

The point is that India's manufacturing sector has enormous work that it has to take on, if it is to get efficient. Equally, India's business infrastructure has to be licked into shape if the system's overall competitiveness is not to continue suffering. And policy changes are required across a very broad spectrum to facilitate these changes. Crucially, the principle of asking people to pay for the goods or services they consume, has to gain much wider acceptance than it does now. If the state can't do it because of political pressures, more and more of economic activity has to be left to private parties, so that pricing decisions get de-politicised.

For instance, if the post office raises its parcel rates, it becomes a matter for Parliament debate, but if a private courier company decides to up its rates, everyone accepts that as routine commercial decision-making. Railway freight rates need Parliament approval for some reason, while trucking rates don't. If the department of telecommunications were to raise its charges, there could well be a political uproar, but the private telephone companies raise and lower charges all the time, and no one notices. The legacy of the 1960s and 1970s, from

which India has been trying to escape, is the pervasive influence of politics on routine economic decision-making. Markets have gained much greater acceptance as an idea, but still very partially.

If in doubt, look at the continuing opposition to privatisation (not least from within the government, and indeed the cabinet itself) as an obvious example of this. The Congress opposed at the stage of its introduction, a bill in the winter session which seeks to lower the government shareholding in the public sector banks. Bank employees have gone on protest strike, not once but twice within the space of a month. And ministers, bureaucrats and a great many others continue to be unhappy about the prospect of privatising a dozen government-owned companies.

But consider the fact that ICICI Bank, which is not more than five years old, has in the space of this short time created greater value for investors than the combined value of the three largest and much older nationalised banks that are quoted on the stock market. HDFC Bank has done the same. Tomorrow, one or two insurance companies will repeat the feat against LIC and GIC. Yet, the latent hold of the Nehruvian mindset is such that these facts don't seem to provide justification in many minds for welcoming more private sector activity. Or, perhaps, it is simply a matter of preserving patronage, nothing more.

To return to the original point, all of this only underscores how little the economic reforms have actually achieved so far, and how much more remains to be done. And we haven't even looked at huge problems facing the economy, like the level of non-performing assets in the term-lending financial institutions and the banks,

which continues to be much higher than is officially declared, thereby raising the cost of finance to all borrowers. Like trade, where the margins continue to be so high because of inefficient trading structures, which raise costs for consumers. And yet, the retail revolution, in terms of a quality experience for shoppers, has only just begun to happen.

Then there is energy. Oil exploration has remained mostly a public sector monopoly, with predictable results. India's oil production has been static for two decades, while oil consumption has trebled. Now, with oil prices having trebled in the space of two years, India's oil import bill has trebled too, and we are sending out an extra 3 per cent of GDP for the same oil that we were importing two years ago. The impact on prices, external balances and economic growth are all obvious, and if prices don't fall further in the near future, the oil crisis still has the potential to derail the economy – for the third time in three decades. If anyone were to harp on a *swadeshi mantra*, it should be in energy.

In the light of all this, the talk of achieving 9 per cent annual GDP growth is so much moonshine. If the last decade achieved a little over 6.5 per cent annual GDP growth (if you start counting the decade from 1991, instead of 1990), it is certainly possible to hope for 7 per cent growth in the coming decade. And it is a fair bet that if 7 per cent growth is in fact achieved, India will remain among the top five or six fastest growing economies in the world. But when one looks at all the unrealised potential, at all the changes that can be made in order to accelerate growth further, it is easy to understand the pessimism, frustration and even anger that prevails in what is after all an economy that is doing pretty well for itself.

Why we need law reform

BIBEK DEBROY

ECONOMISTS often talk about institutional constraints to growth. A good example is the legal system in India. Without reforms in the legal infrastructure, desired GDP (gross domestic product) growth rates of seven or eight per cent plus seem unlikely. Stated differently, post-1991 reforms involve a reliance on market mechanisms. Is the present legal system conducive to market-based behaviour?

Many laws continue to emphasize unnecessary state intervention. However, this is not the only angle to law reform. Even if the 1991 reforms had not happened, the legal system in India would come across as unsatisfactory and inefficient. Legal reform involves essentially two components, law reform and judicial reform. Law reform means changes in laws, while judicial reform refers more to the pro-

cedural aspect, that is, issues of reducing delays and speeding up dispute resolution.

Law as an expression needs to be defined. Not all law is statutory. Traditionally, India belongs to the common law tradition, i.e. some law has traditionally evolved, often through case law, without necessarily being codified. The counterpoint is civil law jurisdiction where most law is codified through statutes. Sometimes, this distinction is no longer very useful, viz. for the bulk of commercial law the law in India has been codified. In addition to statutory law, there is administrative law. Administrative law consists of government orders, regulations and rules. These, though not part of statutory law, are sanctified and allowed under some statutory law or the other.

In 1998, the Government of India set up a Commission on Review of Administrative Laws. Here is a quote from that report, submitted in September 1998.¹ 'The commission was seriously constrained by the fact that it did not have access to a complete set of subordinate legislation in the form of rules, regulations and administrative instructions, issued under different central Acts, by individual ministries and departments. It appears that the legislative department itself did not have such a complete compilation of rules, regulations and procedures issued by the ministries. Another handicap was that the central ministries did not have full information about the rules and regulations issued by state governments. This happened to a government-appointed commission on administrative law reform. It did not have access to all the administrative laws. Apparently, they were last collated and put together in one place in 1963.'

However, there is a problem with statutory law as well. To quote from the Administrative Law Commission's report:² 'There are now nearly 2500 central laws in force. While our focus in this study has been on central laws, it is worthwhile keeping in view the fact that there is not even a rough estimate available about the number of laws operating as state laws. In one state alone, the number is stated to be of the order of 1100. There might, thus, be 25000 to 30000 laws of states.'

The problem lies in Article 246 of the Indian Constitution: '(1) Notwithstanding anything in Clauses (2) and (3), Parliament has exclusive

power to make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in List I in the Seventh Schedule (in this Constitution referred to as the "Union List") (ii) Notwithstanding anything in Clause (3), Parliament, and, subject to Clause (1), the Legislature of any state also, has power to make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in List III in the Seventh Schedule (in this Constitution referred to as the "Concurrent List") (iii) Subject to Clauses (1) and (2), the Legislature of any state has exclusive power to make laws for such state or any part thereof with respect to any of the matters enumerated in List II in the Seventh Schedule (in this Constitution referred to as the "State List").'

The centre and the states can both legislate and no one has the foggiest notion of how many state-level statutes there are. Apparently, in the state of Orissa, someone actually sat down, counted and discovered that there were 1015 in force. Extrapolated, one gets a figure of 25,000 or 30,000 state-level statutes.

The constraint is that these statutes are neither available and rarely published. In part, the problem concerns the Copyright Act of 1957. Under Section 2(k) of the act, 'A work which is made or published under the direction or control of the government or any department of the government, any legislature in India, or any court, tribunal or other judicial authority in India' is defined as 'government work'.

Section 17(d) reads, 'In the case of a government work, government shall, in the absence of any agreement to the contrary, be the first owner of the copyright therein.' So the monopoly of publishing statutes is vested with the government, although Section 52(r) of the Copyright Act does offer some leeway. The point is that, given its monopoly, the government makes

a mess of the business of publishing statutes, except the major ones. Hence the state-level statutes are neither published nor available.

There is a legal principle known as desuetude. This simply means that if a statute is not enforced for a long enough period, courts will regard that the statute has no legal effect. This holds even if the statute is not specifically repealed. But unlike Roman or Scot law, this principle is not accepted in English law, a tradition that India also follows. There is no desuetude. Consequently, unless a statute is specifically repealed, it continues to be on the statute books. The system is completely open-ended.

Given this background, there are several elements to law reform. First, there are old and dysfunctional statutes which need to be junked. Sometimes, an entire statute cannot be junked, but dysfunctional and old sections can be scrapped.³ Second, despite the large number of statutes, there are areas where the necessary law does not exist in India today.⁴ Third, there is over-legislation and unnecessary state intervention, both in statutory law and administrative law.⁵ These increase transaction costs. Fourth, dispute resolution needs to be speeded up. This has several elements – improving the efficiency of alternative channels of dispute resolution and cutting down on the demand for adjudication, curbing appeals and government litigation, computerization and

3 B. Debroy, *In the Dock: Absurdities of Indian Law* (Konark Publishers, 2000), is a collation of such dysfunctional elements in central statutes.

4 Having made the point, we will ignore this issue. Examples of missing legislation are in areas like electronic commerce, credit cards, hire purchase and leasing and some areas of intellectual property.

5 Over-legislation exists simultaneously with under-governance.

improving the efficiency of existing benches, increasing the number of judges and benches and reforming procedural law

All these issues cannot be addressed in the space of a brief paper. For our purposes, we will only illustrate some of these points using labour laws as an example

Labour market rigidities constrain growth in employment, is an argument often advanced by economists.⁶ In the absence of flexible labour markets in the organized sector,⁷ growth in output does not necessarily lead to an increase in employment because labour effectively becomes a fixed input. Hence, production becomes artificially capital intensive. In an attempt to protect existing jobs, future and potential jobs are lost. Thus, the system is not in the broader interests of labour either. In addition, labour legislation creates relatively high wage islands in the organized sector such that India's comparative advantage in an abundant supply of labour cannot be tapped. It is not surprising that most of India's export basket originates in the unorganized sector. Conversely, the unorganized sector has virtually no protection.

Under Article 246 of the Indian Constitution, labour is placed in the concurrent list,⁸ barring exceptions like labour and safety in mines and oil-fields and industrial disputes concerning Union employees that are in the central list. This issue is important given inter-state variations in labour laws. Consequently, labour market

rigidity or flexibility varies from state to state. Subject to the comment made about labour being on the concurrent list, the list of central labour laws that have something directly to do with labour runs to 45.

Do we really need 45 and more statutes? Apart from the constitutional angle of the Seventh Schedule, are special statutes needed for cine workers, dock workers, motor transport workers, sales promotion employees, plantation labour, working journalists and workers in mines? Consider also the time span of the legislation, from the Fatal Accidents Act of 1855 to the Public Liability Insurance Act of 1991. Over a period of time, concepts and definitions have changed. So has the case law, contributing to further confusion. The law does not agree on definitions of adolescent, child, contract labour, wages, employee, workman, factory and industry. The case law only makes it worse. The case law under the Industrial Disputes Act has held almost everything to be an industry⁹ – panchayat samitis, state hospitals, real estate companies, running of tubewells, primary health centres, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, religious institutions, universities and research institutions.

All these concepts, definitions and provisions need to be unified. For instance, all social security type provisions can be unified into a single statute. Similarly, all wage type legislation can also be unified into a single statute. The National Labour Association attempted this through a

conditions of work, provident funds, employer's liability, workmen's compensation, invalidity and old age pensions and maternity benefits.

⁹ Especially after the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board vs. A. Rajappa case in 1978 and an amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act in 1982.

Uniform Indian Labour Code.¹⁰ But this has not been implemented.

From unification and harmonization, we now move on to reductions in state intervention in areas other than industrial relations. We will come to industrial relations later. The Factories Act is a good example of unnecessary government stipulations. Do we need the government to lay down stipulations like the following?¹¹

Section 20 '(i) In every factory there shall be provided a sufficient number of spittoons in convenient places and they shall be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. (ii) The state government may make rules prescribing the type and the number of spittoons to be provided and their location in any factory and provide for such further matters relating to their maintenance in a clean and hygienic condition. (iii) No person shall spit within the premises of a factory except in the spittoons provided for the purpose and a notice containing this provision and the penalty for its violation shall be prominently displayed at suitable places in the premises.'

Section 43 'The state government may, in respect of any factory or class or description of factories, make rules requiring the provision therein of suitable places for keeping clothing not worn during working hours and for the drying of wet clothing.'

These are examples from only one act. It is no one's case that welfare provisions should not exist. But are welfare provisions enacted in 1948 still relevant? Assuming that they are, is the present government-mandated system with a regime of inspectors the best way to achieve the objective?

¹⁰ Uniform Indian Labour Code – A Draft, National Labour Association and FES, 1994.

¹¹ This is only a small list. There are many more along similar lines.

⁶ India Policies to Reduce Poverty and Accelerate Sustainable Development. World Bank, 31 January 2000 is a recent example.

⁷ Which accounts for less than 8% of the labour force.

⁸ Item 22 on trade unions, industrial and labour disputes, item 23 on social security and social insurance, employment and unemployment, item 24 on welfare of labour including

Each labour legislation has a separate inspector and visits of inspectors are not synchronized across all labour enactments. Barring the Payment of Wages Act, where a maximum period of three years is stipulated, no other labour statute prescribes a maximum period for which records and registers must be maintained. Compliance is thus impossible and visits of inspectors result in bribery and rent-seeking. This system is not distributionally neutral as it tends to hurt the small-scale sector much more than it hurts large-scale industry. That apart, returns under various labour laws are not standardized and inspectors insist on maintenance of manual records and registers.

* There can be a common format for computerization of required records.

† There should be a single inspector for a given area.

‡ Some inspections for site and building and site plans or testing equipment can be farmed out to recognized private agencies.

§ With the opening up of insurance, some social security provisions can be farmed out. For example, the Employees' State Insurance Act hasn't worked at all well.

Let us now turn to industrial relations. The three statutes that impinge on industrial relations are the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, the Trade Unions Act and the Industrial Disputes Act.

The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act was never meant to prohibit contract labour. Section 10 provided the government the discretion of prohibiting contract labour in selected areas. In fact, regulation comes before abolition in the title of the act. Contract labour allows flexibility and permits outsourcing. However, a few court judgements have affected this flexibility. In 1960

and again in 1972, the Supreme Court ruled that if work performed by contract labour was essential to the main activity of the industry, contract labour should be abolished.¹² Work should be done by regular workmen and contract labour should be absorbed by the principal employer.

In 1976, the central government issued a notification that in establishments run by it, contract labour should not be used for sweeping, cleaning, dusting and watching of buildings. But the 1970 act was still not clear on whether contract labour should be absorbed after the abolition.¹³ However, in a recent judgement, the Supreme Court has ruled that contract labour must be absorbed.¹⁴

Such judgements reduce labour market flexibility. There is an argument doing the rounds that the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act should be scrapped. This sounds like an attractive proposition, but is probably facile. If the 1970 statute is scrapped, decisions on abolition of contract labour will revert from the government to industrial tribunals. To take the Factories Act as an example, industrial tribunals are likely to conclude that since canteens are mandated under Section 46 of the Factories Act, no contract labour can be employed in canteens. It seems a better idea to retain the 1970 act and tighten up Section 10 so that ambiguity about continuance of contract labour

and absorption following abolition is removed.

Next, one should mention the Trade Unions Act. As a minor point, child labour is not prohibited in India, it is only prohibited in hazardous processes. Yet, under Section 21 of the Trade Unions Act, those under 15 are not allowed to be members of trade unions and Section 21-A prevents those under 18 from becoming office bearers. But more important are provisions of the act that lead to multiplicity. Under Section 4 of the Trade Unions Act, any seven people can form and register a trade union and these seven people need not even be workers. There is no cap on office bearers being from outside either. Nor is there any test for representativeness of a trade union, through secret ballots or otherwise.

The multiplicity problem impinges on collective bargaining because an agreement with one union is not necessarily binding on others. This is partly due to Section 18(1) of the Industrial Disputes Act, which states, 'A settlement arrived at by agreement between the employer and workman otherwise than in the course of conciliation proceeding shall be binding on the parties to the agreement.' It is not mandatory on others. Maharashtra and Gujarat are the only states with laws requiring recognition of trade unions by employers for purposes of collective bargaining. Following recommendations of the Second Labour Commission, the Union cabinet has now approved amendments to the Trade Unions Act. The number of persons required for registration of a trade union will change from 7 to 10% of the labour force. Not more than one-third of office bearers (subject to a maximum of five) can be outsiders. And the holding of annual elections and auditing of accounts will be mandatory. If

12 Standard Vacuum Refining Company of India Limited vs. Its Workmen (1960 III SCR 466) and Vegoils Private Limited vs. The Workmen (1972 I SCR 673).

13 The Supreme Court's judgements in Denanath vs. National Fertilizers Limited (1992 I SCC 695) and Gujarat Electricity Board vs. Hind Mazdoor Sabha (1995 5 SCC 27). The decision was effectively left to the Industrial Tribunal.

14 Air India vs. United Labour Union (1996 9 SCC 70).

these changes are accepted by Parliament, many of the problems connected with the Trade Unions Act will disappear

Next one moves on to the Industrial Disputes Act, the following is a list of sections where there are problems

Section 9-A This prevents technological upgradation since, 'No employer, who proposes to effect any change in the conditions of service applicable to any workman in respect of any matter specified in the Fourth Schedule, shall effect such change (a) without giving notice to the workman likely to be affected by such change a notice in the prescribed manner of the nature of the change proposed to be effected, or (b) within twenty-one days of giving such notice '

Section 11 Not all disputes need to go through a process of adjudication But Section 11 of the Industrial Disputes Act does not make it mandatory for conciliation officers to try for conciliation This is despite Section 12(2), which merely states that the conciliation officer 'may do all such things as he thinks fit for the purpose of inducing the parties to come to a fair and amicable settlement of the dispute 'Nor do Sections 10 and 11 prescribe a maximum time limit for raising old disputes

Section 11-A This section needs to be quoted 'Where an industrial dispute relating to the discharge or dismissal of a workman has been referred to a labour court, tribunal or national tribunal for adjudication and, in the course of the adjudication proceedings, the labour court, tribunal or national tribunal, as the case may be, is satisfied that the order of discharge or dismissal was not satisfied, it may, by its award, set aside the order of discharge or dismissal and direct reinstatement of the workman on such terms and conditions, if any, as it may

think fit, or give such other relief to the workman including the award of any lesser punishment in lieu of discharge or dismissal as the circumstances of the case may require ' Should such blanket powers be granted to labour courts or tribunals? Directing appropriate retrenchment compensation is one thing, but is directing reinstatement necessary? Is such discretion to labour courts and tribunals necessary? A reversion to the pre-1971 statute, before Section 11-A was inserted, is probably better

Section 17-B If the employer appeals to a High Court or Supreme Court against the award of a labour court or tribunal, under Section 17-B, full wages have to be paid to the workman pending such proceedings, even if the appeal is admitted

Sections 22/23 Section 22 prohibits strikes and lockouts without notice But this section only applies to public utility services Section 23 prohibits strikes and lockouts for all industrial establishments, but only during the pendency of conciliation or arbitration proceedings These sections can be amended to require prior notice in the case of strikes and lockouts for all industrial establishments There can even be a requirement that a certain threshold percentage of workers must be in favour of the strike or lockout

Chapter V-B/Sections 25-K, 25-L, 25-M, 25-N and 25-O These provisions apply to industrial establishments that employ more than 100 workers and require prior permission of the appropriate government before layoffs, retrenchment and closure Most problems connected with the Industrial Disputes Act arise from Chapter V-B, since the government becomes a third party to the dispute even if the employee is satisfied with the severance package These sections

need to be considered in conjunction with Section 2-A, which makes any dispute between an employer and an individual workman an industrial dispute 'notwithstanding that no other workman nor any union of workmen is a party to the dispute ' Note also the judgement of the Supreme Court in the Sundara Money case ¹⁵ Even if there is surplus labour force, that is no ground for retrenchment A reversion to the pre-1976 statute, when Chapter V-B did not exist, is again desirable

Consider now the case law

¹ The discharge of an employee appointed on probation, during or at the end of the probationary period, is retrenchment

² If there is a purely temporary appointment for nine days, terminated automatically at the end of nine days, that is retrenchment

³ A workman whose services are terminated because he failed to pass a test required for confirmation is retrenched

⁴ The termination of a workman's service on account of unauthorized absence is retrenchment

Perhaps a quote from a Supreme Court judgement is relevant ¹⁶ 'Gradually, the net was cast too wide and the freedom of the employer tightened to such an extent by introduction of the impugned provisions that it has come to a breaking point from the point of view of the employers It is not quite correct to say that because compensation is not a substitute for the remedy of prevention of unemployment, the latter remedy must be the only one If it were so, then in no case closure can be or should be allowed But, so long as the private ownership of an industry is recognised and governed on an

¹⁵ State Bank of India vs Sundara Money AIR 1976 SC 1111

¹⁶ Excel Wear vs Union of India AIR 1979 SC 25

overwhelmingly large proportion of our economic structure, is it possible to say that principles of socialism and social justice can be pushed to such an extreme so as to ignore completely, or to a very large extent, the interest of another section of the public, viz the private owners of the undertakings?’

Next, a few comments about the adjudication process are in order, although this gets into general problems of dispute resolution. Under the Industrial Disputes Act, termination disputes are expected to be decided within three months. This rarely happens such that termination disputes have often remained pending for more than eight years. Beyond these eight years, there can be writ petitions before High Courts and special leave petitions as well. So a termination dispute can take more than 30 years.

There are several not mutually exclusive ways to solve this problem. First, there can be a greater emphasis on conciliation and mediation. Second, the working efficiency of labour courts and tribunals can be improved. If an average number of 65 cases per day are posted, why should on average only one case per day be heard and the remaining 64 adjourned?¹⁷ Benchmarks for daily performance can be set. Third, there is need to stick to the maximum of three adjournments permitted and not deviate from this principle. Fourth, there may be a need to create a labour judiciary delinked from the civil judiciary, as labour cases often require special expertise. Fifth, there should be no delay in filling vacancies. Sixth, the principle

that advocates cannot appear before labour courts and tribunals without permission of the opposite party, needs to be enforced. That is, there is need to revise Section 38(2)(f) of the Industrial Disputes Act.¹⁸

Seventh, the requirement that awards must be published can be scrapped. This only contributes to additional delays. Eighth, an autonomous Industrial Relations Commission can be set up in each state. This is needed because the awards of labour courts and tribunals are meant to be final, but writ petitions are routinely admitted before High Courts under Articles 226 and 227 of the Constitution. Once there is an Industrial Relations Commission, appeals before High Courts can be scrapped, retaining appeals to the Supreme Court under Article 136 of the Constitution.

If some of these changes are implemented, labour markets will become more flexible, the segmentation between organized and unorganized labour markets will break down and India will be able to tap the comparative advantage of an abundant supply of skilled and unskilled labour. Reportedly, other than what has been said about the Trade Unions Act, the government is planning an Industrial Relations Act to replace the Industrial Disputes Act and the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act. However, the contours of the proposed Industrial Relations Act are yet unclear but for the indication that Chapter V-B of the Industrial Disputes Act is likely to be retained.

Labour markets are but one example. The entire canvas of legal reform is a much broader one and will demand a long haul. Unfortunately, not much has happened since 1991.

17 These are actual sample survey figures from Karnataka, obtained through a study done by the National Law School of India University, Bangalore and quoted in V. Nagraj, 'Labour Laws' in N. R. Madhava Menon and Bibek Debroy (ed.), *Legal Dimensions of Economic Reforms*, Allied Publishers, 1995.

18 This governs conditions under which parties can be represented by legal practitioners.

Reform political parties first

PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

IT is surprising that in the midst of our current debates over constitutional reform little attention is being paid to the reform of the internal structures of our political parties. While the Law and Election Commissions have often argued for the better functioning of political parties, politicians and the public at large act as if reforming political parties is inconsequential. Many of the anxieties that lie behind the calls for constitutional reform can be more effectively addressed by reforming the structure of our political parties.

The fragmentation of the party system and the prospect of perpetual coalition governments, the weakening of democratic accountability despite high turnover of incumbents, the fact that political parties are unable to transcend their narrow social bases and become parties of principle, the diminishing quality of public deliberation in our politics – all have their roots, less in the failure of the Constitution than in the party structures that have grown under it. These outcomes are, to a considerable degree, produced by poor institutionalization of intraparty democracy.

The lack of attention given to the inner functioning of political parties is surprising. Most complex democracies are unthinkable without par-

ties. Democracy performs its most salient functions through parties. The selection of candidates, the mobilization of the electorate, the formulation of agendas, the passing of legislation – is all conducted through parties. Parties are, in short, the mechanisms through which power is exercised in a democracy. While, thanks to Robert Michels' classic analysis in *Political Parties*, few are naive enough to believe that the oligarchic tendencies of political parties can be entirely overcome, it is abundantly clear that the ways in which parties structure opportunities has decisive outcomes for democracy.

Atul Kohli has, for instance, argued for the importance of political parties for understanding both governance and land reform. India's so called crisis of governability was, on this account, a consequence of the decline of the Congress party. And successful land reform requires, as one of its conditions, a leftist cadre based party committed to implementing redistribution. But despite insisting on the centrality of political parties, Kohli's account paid relatively less attention to the ways in which the internal institutionalization of procedures within a party has an impact on both structuring access to power and

the formation of party systems. I will argue briefly that the lack of clear democratic procedures within parties adversely affects the functioning of Indian democracy in numerous ways.

Why does the lack of intraparty democracy produce adverse outcomes for Indian democracy? The poor institutionalization of intraparty democratic procedures means that the internal functioning of parties is not transparent. The criteria for the basic decisions any party has to take, ranging from candidate selection to party platform, remain either unclear or are left to the discretion of one or a handful of leaders. The more the discretionary power vested with leaders, the more a political party will depend solely on its leaders for renewal.

This is so for many reasons. First, one of the most important functions of democracy in any setting is epistemic—to allow the free and uninhibited flow of relevant information. The less internally democratic a party, the less likely it is that the relevant information will flow up party conduits. The Congress leadership's spectacular failure to be attentive to local conditions during the '70s and '80s is a recent instance of this phenomenon. Second, if the criteria for advancement within the party are unclear and whimsical, newly mobilized social groups or leaders are less likely to work within existing party structures and will be more tempted to set up their own. If there are no formal mechanisms to challenge entrenched party hierarchies and regulate conflict within parties, they are more likely to fragment.

Kanchan Chandra, for instance, has argued that the relative lack of intraparty democracy within the Congress in U.P. compared to Karnataka during the '70s prevented it from incorporating newly mobilized back-

ward caste groups. Because the criteria for entry and advancement were not clear, these groups were driven to form their own parties rather than take over existing ones. Of course, parties can often incorporate new groups without formally open mechanisms, but such incorporation usually depends upon farsighted leadership rather than reliable procedures. The lack of such procedures may have contributed to the fragmentation of the party system.

Comparative evidence from Europe and Latin America also suggests that where intraparty democracy is better institutionalized, there is less likely to be fragmentation of the party system. Our fragmented party system may therefore be as much an artifact of the institutional incoherence of our parties as anything else. It is not an accident that the evolution of stable party systems and the proper institutionalization of intraparty democracy often go together. Comparative research on Latin America, for example, suggests that reform of the internal functioning of parties was crucial for democratic consolidation in many respects.

It is a notorious fact that Indian democracy is becoming less deliberative in more ways than one can list. Not only are institutions like Parliament rapidly deteriorating in their deliberative capacities and oversight functions, elections rarely provide an occasion for a protracted wrestling with complex issues. The phenomenon that many observers have described as the 'ethnification' of the party system, whereby voters are most likely to vote according to their caste or some other ethnic affiliation and political parties find it very difficult to transcend their respective social bases, may be in part a product of the fact that elections are rarely a contest

of ideas (even if the range of ideas is narrow).

If the ethnification of the party system is to be overcome, parties will have to ensure that elections are contests over ideas that voters can critically assess. There is a good deal of deserved self-congratulation about the fact that in recent decades Indian democracy has produced an unprecedented mobilization of Backward Castes and Dalits. But this self-congratulation has occluded the fact that there is relatively little serious, open and protracted discussion of policy issues. Our political parties resist such discussion; most party leaders are unembarrassingly unaware of their own manifestoes; most members of Parliament seem not to have the foggiest idea about the bills they voted for or against, and legislative agendas, with the exception of a few high profile and often merely symbolic issues, are seldom the object of contention in electoral politics.

I cannot see any other way of remedying the lack of public deliberation on these issues other than through changing the culture of political parties in India.

In most democracies, parties perform crucial educative functions. Political leaders used to accepting the discipline and sanctity of democratic procedures within their own parties are also less likely to circumvent democracy when in government. Moreover, protracted intraparty primaries have a profound impact on party members. If the party platform is put up for serious contestation within the party, it is more likely that party members will know why their party takes the positions it does. It is also more likely that the battle within parties will become something more of a battle of ideas rather than a race for patronage.

The simple reason for the poor quality of public deliberation in forums like Parliament is this: the rise of leaders within political parties is not, in a single instance, dependent upon persuading party members of the cogency of your ideas. This is partly a result of the fact that within parties there is no such thing as an open and fair contest at almost any level of the party hierarchy. Election campaigns are both too brief and enormous in scope to act as proper forums for protracted deliberation.

In most democracies the groundwork of political education is done within political parties and the more open and democratic their structure the more likely it is that politicians will be better educated on the issues. More effective forms of accountability and deliberation require a pluralization of the sites at which politicians are held accountable and parties are essential to this process. The current state of our parties is schooling our politicians in arbitrariness, haphazardness, uncertainty and lack of deliberative purpose.

Poorly institutionalized intraparty democracy produces more factions. In circumstances where the legitimacy of contending groups within a party is not dependent upon a clearly verifiable and open mandate from within the party, the survival of political leaders depends more on political intrigue than on persuading their followers. And those who lose out in this process can nurse the illusion that they were victims of intrigue rather than of their own failures.

Hence those who lose the contest for party leadership are never delegitimized. Only in a system where the road to the top is less dependent upon creating a mass support within the party can so many politicians openly harbour the ambition of the highest office. Of course, much fac-

tionalism is simply a product of ambition. But ambition is given freer rein in circumstances where there are no settled procedures to determine whose authority counts.

All our political parties are in internal disarray. The Congress has no institutional mechanisms for incorporating new groups or generating a set of leaders with some popular base. The ideological differences within the BJP between L. K. Advani and Bangaru Laxman are signs that a war of succession is beginning in earnest. The Janata Dal and the Third Front has always been hampered by the fact that there are no clear criteria to determine who will inherit the mantle of leadership. The only way in which this Front can coalesce into an enduring coalition is if it can settle upon procedural norms that will facilitate decisions rather than rely upon the whims and ambitions of a handful of leaders. In the absence of clear democratic procedures within the parties to resolve these questions, these parties will continue to be plagued by the factionalism that has been so detrimental to both their own interests and the stabilization of the party system.

The simple fact is that the lack of intraparty democracy impedes proper representation rather than enhances it. By their non-transparency, parties have restricted voter choices rather than increase them. The reasons for the lack of proper intraparty democracy are not hard to understand. Parties are endogenous institutions that adopt certain norms and procedures. The question is under what conditions do parties choose to create democratic rules and procedures in the first place? What incentives do they have to institutionalize democracy within their parties?

Here the answers turn out not to be very encouraging. Leaders like as

much control over their parties as possible. They like to set agendas, select candidates that are beholden to them, and maintain themselves in power. Most leaders have an incentive not to institutionalize settled procedures for challenging their power. And those who are left out of power circuits within parties find it difficult to act collectively to reform procedures.

This is so for a number of reasons. They can be individually bought off by those in power, they fear the added uncertainty to their prospects for advancement that contesting elections might create, and few have enough commitment to procedural proprieties to fight for them. The short-term interests of party leaders are thus often at odds with the long-term interests of the party.

Comparative evidence suggests that even parties of long-standing authority reform themselves very rarely. It took decades to reform the British Labour party's internal procedures. The Democratic Party in the U.S. stumbled into reforms only in the late '60s. Since the democratization of parties is tied to power struggles within the parties, it is not surprising that there have been very few attempts at democratization. But this does not mean failure is inevitable. The rank and file of the party will have to insist that it is in the long-term interests of the party to properly institutionalize procedures. Or, alternatively, the internal configurations of power within parties need to be propitious.

For instance, one can imagine conditions of stalemate within a political party where two contending factions are almost equally arrayed in terms of their power, where both lose substantially if one of the factions leaves the party, and where the only mechanism for reconciling the factions is the institutionalization of fair

procedures. Under what conditions the contingent set of circumstances that might give parties reasons to reform might arise is therefore hard to predict. It is not surprising that there have been few moves towards seriously institutionalizing reforms of political parties.

Does the remoteness of the prospect that political parties will undertake to reform themselves mean that intraparty democracy should be legislated into existence? Certainly, comparative evidence again suggests that state regulation is often necessary for party reform. In Germany parties have been required to meet certain conditions in nominating their candidates. Candidates have to be chosen by a direct secret vote of members of the party at both constituency and federal levels. If the party's management committee objects to a list so chosen, a second vote is held and the results are final.

In the American case, first laws were enacted that required the use of secret ballots in intraparty elections. Laws laying down the qualifications for party membership followed these, in turn followed by statutes specifying the administrative structure of parties, till finally the direct primary was instituted. It is true that in the American system, in some states, minor parties are not required to comply in the same way as the major parties with the legal structures imposed upon them.

If there is legal mandating of intraparty elections in India, we will have to carefully examine the advantages and disadvantages of different nominating procedures. There is a whole range of procedures available that would repay careful study which cannot be undertaken within the confines of this paper. It may be the case that parties can be given wide latitude in setting up their own voting proce-

dures, so long as they are recognizably democratic. My own view is that one must be cautious in involving the state in India for a couple of reasons.

First, I do not think that despite the desirability of intraparty democracy, only political parties that institutionalize intraparty democracy should be allowed to contest elections. Freedom of association, within limits, on terms that one chooses is an equally important value. There seems to be no normative argument why parties that do not function internally democratically should be banned from the political process. We are free not to vote for them, but we cannot silence their voices. I also suspect that it is more important that the large parties have such procedures because they structure access to power in more significant ways than smaller parties. Smaller parties could be given more discretion.

Second and most importantly, there are grave dangers in giving independent commissions more powers to disqualify political parties. Such commissions ought to insist on and oversee the fact that parties do not violate legal norms. But giving them *carte blanche* powers to decide when a particular party has held internal elections is both normatively and prudentially unsound. Normatively speaking, parties ought to be self-organizing and their structure ought not to be mandated by the state. Prudentially speaking, can we trust independent commissions to fair arbiters of the process?

The recent record of the Election Commission has been exemplary, but that may be an artifact of contingent circumstances like the quality of election commissioners we have had. The degree to which a party has organized fair internal elections cannot be easily made clear and giving state bodies

wide latitude in interpreting this requirement would be to invite disaster. Imagine the prospect of a major political party being disqualified on the eve of elections because of some technicality pertaining to the way in which it conducted its internal elections. Giving election commissioners powers to disenfranchise parties, no matter how worthy the cause, itself runs serious risks. These risks may not be ultimately decisive, but they should be taken seriously. These issues require more consideration than can be given here.

Reforming parties will be a slow and laborious process. I have not touched on many issues that are important to institutionalizing healthy political parties: the sources of political finance, the criteria for membership and so forth. Any attempts to institutionalize intraparty democracy will have to take them into consideration. Nor is the reform of parties a panacea for all ills. But one thing is clear: The reform of political parties will have to be the focus of our political energies.

The health of democracy requires that we attend to the health of our parties and the party system. Intraparty democracy will prevent fragmentation of parties, make politicians more accountable and enhance the quality of deliberation. The degree to which political parties are willing to countenance grand constitutional experiments without setting their own houses in order ought to be an object of suspicion.

Our anxieties about the functioning of democracy in India are more likely to be alleviated by proper attention to intraparty democracy than by tinkering with a constitution that exemplifies the democratic aspirations more than our party leaders do.

Politics of reordering chaos

HARISH KHARE

IN the last week of November 2000 that wonderful heretic, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, former prime minister, issued a public statement. After making the obligatory references to the need for a Third Front, this marvellous practitioner of 'politics of chaos' excused himself from involvement with any such enterprise. He then added 'I believe while political parties are important in their own area, there is a greater need of issue based people's action. Experience, world over, has shown that whatever the political party in power, a dichotomy between the government and the people does develop over a period of time. There is a perpetual need to bridge this gap to make democracy a living experience to the people. Democracy should be a daily experience rather than merely a five-year "mela". This is possible only when people live democracy by their organized action. It is

the best way to keep political parties on track. Peoples action on an ongoing basis is very much needed beyond elections and beyond governments. Whatever governments we may make, democracy will not work unless people make it work themselves.'

Predictably, V P Singh was mostly ignored by the 'mainstream' media. Of those who took note of him, chose to focus on his views on the workability of a Third Front. Most missed his diagnosis of the growing dysfunctionality of traditional politics as the mediating agency between an increasingly restive citizenry and an incrementally shrinking Indian state, otherwise omnipotent and omnipresent all these decades. Unconcerned and undeterred, Singh proceeded to Chennai where he led a symbolic farmers' protest at the Madras Port, trying to block the unloading of highly subsidized agricultural products from

other countries, an import obligation mandated by the new WTO-based international economic regime

The contradictions – and pains – are just beginning to be felt. This protest was merely a tip of the iceberg of the countrywide unrest among various farming communities – in Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh. And the farmers are not the only ones feeling the impact of the new globalized order. The politically correct expression is ‘globalization anxiety’.

In the first week of December came the soul-lifting news of Priyanka Chopra being crowned the world’s most beautiful woman at the annual Miss World beauty carnival in London. This cheerful news was, predictably enough, front-paged, back-paged, in-paged, supplemented and otherwise celebrated as the final evidence of India’s superpower status in information technology and female beauty. What a moment of national satisfaction it was made out to be! Chopra’s triumph was a beautiful distraction from farmers’ suicides, killings in Kashmir, ethnic violence in Assam, excesses of an ivory-poacher in Karnataka/Tamilnadu, and the ravages of floods and drought in this or that part of the country.

The almost wilful downplaying of the farming community’s plight all these months, and the determined serenading of beauty queens, points to a new creeping disequilibrium among forces, perceptions and reflexes in the Indian polity. The crux of the problem can be simply stated. The old and dated political technologies and rhetoric of egalitarian social dreams continue to be deployed by antagonists and adversaries pursuing traditional agendas, while new economic transactions and newer information exchange opportunities have overwhelmed and, increasingly bypassed

the existing institutions and institutional managers of the Indian state.

In sharp contrast to the sense of stability and adequacy that was attributed to the post-economic reforms era of the 1990s, there is an all round awareness of new uncorked anxieties and pressures on our collective arrangements. It seems it was only a few years ago that judgments were being made about the ‘ruralization of the power structure’ in which the invincibility of the farming community’s clout was considered irreversible.¹

Also, judgments were made about the space carved out for themselves by the newer, assertive under-classes at the high table.² Suddenly it seems that the liberalization/globalization processes have brought in their wake rewards and penalties which facilitate setting up a different – higher – table, with or without the state’s cooperation. A small section is even confident of taking on the global challenges.³

The problem, then, becomes one of how to reinforce the institutional efficacy, efficiency and decency of the Indian state so as to meet, competently and adequately, the external

1 Ashutosh Varshney, *Democracy, Development and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

2 Zoya Hasan, ‘The Political Career of the State in Independent India’, in Zoya Hasan (ed.), *Politics and the State in India* (New Delhi: Sage, 2000).

3 At the annual congregation of corporate India, under the World Economic Forum, Anil Ambani, scion of our most successful industrial house, expressed the up-beat mood: ‘In a globalised and borderless environment today, talent is footloose and seeks out the best opportunities and quality of life, worldwide. All corporations – Indian or international – are faced with the challenge of attracting the best talent from the global pool. Cross-border mobility will be the norm – India, and Indian corporations, need to position themselves as attractive destinations, for domestic and international talent, if they have to compete in the global markets’.

demands intrinsic to the era of globalization, and internal turmoil inherent in the never-ending struggle over reallocation and misallocation of resources among contending classes and groups.⁴ New and potential hegemonies are questioning and challenging the entrenched economic, intellectual and cultural orthodoxies.

In other words, the central task the Indian polity finds itself having to undertake is one of meditating the mix of old and new disputes without the state having either the earlier resources, the mandate or an unadulterated legitimacy. The matrix of chaos and order is being reworked, the challenge before the governing class is to calibrate change so as to ensure that order does not degenerate into chaos.

A number of tasks demand our collective attention. First, it appears that the basic concept of ‘public purpose’ needs to be redefined and renegotiated. At the core of the Nehruvian consensus was the dream of an egalitarian order (eradication of poverty, social equality, elimination of caste barriers, empowerment of women, minorities, and the dalits). This promise of an egalitarian order became the *raison d’être* of the legitimacy of the Indian state, which in turn demanded – and got – obedience, allegiance and taxes from one and all. The fact that the Nehruvian consensus has been pronounced to have dissipated itself only means that the elites – political, bureaucratic, economic, business, media – no longer subscribe to the desirability of the idea of an egalitarian order.

While no ‘mainstream’ voice has been raised against the old public

4 There is now a vicious circle between low performing state governments and their ability to attract investments. See, Montek S. Ahluwalia, ‘Economic Performance of States in Post-Reforms Period’, *Economic and Political Weekly* 35(19), 6 May 2000.

purpose, enough arguments have been advanced to suggest the irrelevance of that concept. The BJP is perhaps the first organized voice demanding a redefinition of national public purpose. In its Chennai Declaration (29 December 1999), the BJP talked of a new public purpose '21st Century, India's Century'. It argued 'The only *mantra* that will transform this vision into reality is the Mantra of Development – faster development, equitable development and development of every aspect of life. This demands a change of mindset in the party, in the government and among the people'. This insistence on the need for a change of mindset is essentially a plea for abandoning old concerns and commitments.

Related to the overall question of national public purpose is the matter of political competition and party activity in an age of shrinking state power and patronage. If in the immediate post-Independence decades of Congress dominance, the political class was motivated enough to want to experience the joy and ecstasy of building a new India, in the later years it had the satisfaction of self-promotion and self-aggrandizement from the activities of an ever expanding state committed to a welfare agenda. But, now, if the new liberalized/globalized order will insist on a corruption-free and transparent ways of letting the market function according to its own laws and vagaries, how will the vast army of political cadres/activists motivate itself to 'serve' the 'public'?

As it is, the best and the brightest have kept away from the 'public' domain for sometime now, but, if the state is being asked to mend its wasteful and near parasitical ways, what mix of motives and desires would impel an otherwise employable young man to make a profession of public

life? Does this not mean that the political cadres would be drawn from lumpenised, marginalised groups, otherwise unfit for the job market, simultaneously, political 'leadership' slots could also be filled by the super-affluent, who would use their perch in public life to multiply assets.

Political life, in other words, is increasingly becoming a site for the crook, the criminal and the compromised. Normative dilemmas apart, such a political 'elite' would neither have the backbone nor competence to think its way through conflicting temptations and vulnerabilities in an increasingly inter-connected and inter-dependent world. The Americans are forever patting themselves on the back for making the Chinese sign 'a comprehensive market-opening agreement covering virtually every part of China's economy'.⁵

The BJP, in a way, took note of the emerging problem. Its Chennai Declaration talked of the 'ideal BJP worker'. It stated 'Our party must also strengthen unity and discipline at all levels. Senior functionaries have a greater responsibility to quickly correct lapses in this regard. Constant inner-party consultations, both formal and informal, in the framework of internal democracy, promotion of the spirit of camaraderie and cooperation, self-initiatives to take up difficult tasks, readiness to do mass work and take up people's causes at all levels, and shunning any instinct to place oneself above the organization – these are the hallmarks of a true BJP worker. Individualism, groupism, factional fights, neglect of teamwork, power lust and jostling for positions are totally alien to both our political philosophy and our proud organizational

5 Charlene Barshefsky, U.S. Trade Representative, at National Press Club, 19 October 2000 (text USIS).

tradition. Sadly, developments in recent years involving some leading functionaries of the party in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh have shown that our party is not immune to these pathogenic political influences. The BJP is trying, perhaps futilely, to escape the fate that has befallen the Congress, a party now firmly in the grip of parasitical 'cadres'.

It is against these twin processes – of declining nobility of public purpose and the declining quality of political cadres – that the task of reinforcing the political capacities of the Indian state has to be undertaken. The marked deterioration in party loyalties and discipline has eroded the efficacy of leaders to carry their parties with them, the leaders in turn have learnt the inevitability of sharing power with colleagues (in sharp contrast to the Supreme Leader model practiced by Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, a model that contributed enormously to the irreversible decline in the party's electoral and political fortunes). These processes have hastened fragmentation of the party system, and have now put a premium on fragmentation in this age of coalitions.

It then follows that, sooner or later, collective attention must focus on how to minimize the unproductive cost of political disputes and competition. If the political class is to retrieve its lost moral authority and popular acceptability, it would have to recognize and address the issue of 'too much politics'.

During the last winter session, Parliament did not function for seven days because the opposition parties vied with one another to capture the 'secular' space. While the very notion of a democratic arrangement entitles everyone to demand attention for his/her cause, grievance, fears, aspirations and dreams, after five decades

of uncompromising competitive politics there is expectation that political leaders and parties observe a semblance of sincerity and transparency in their observable conduct and professed commitments. Only an austere and honest political class can command the requisite legitimacy and moral authority to state, define and articulate 'national' interests and public purpose.

Thus, the central task is to reorient the rites and rituals of the Indian polity to meet the twin processes of liberalization/globalization. Outsiders have noted the curious, almost surreptitious ways in which reforms have been 'sold' to the Indian people – more than nine years in this process of economic liberalization, the political establishment as a whole is still in a mood of more or less acceptance rather than outright support. Reform has still to become a rallying flag. There have been many comparisons between China and India as they go through the same type of process, but there is one key aspect that is not mentioned enough. It is that where China has succeeded – and where India has still a long way to go – is in making economic growth and the achievement of prosperity a national obsession.⁶

Again, it is the BJP that has realized that the old order is truly over, and is preparing itself for the new arrangement. Its Chennai Declaration noted: 'Mindful of its new role and responsibilities as a governing party, the BJP shall inculcate among all its activists and members an attitude of finding solutions, rather than merely focusing on problems. When new initiatives and hard decisions are needed

– and they will be needed if India has to break free from the accumulated legacy of malgovernance by the Congress and take to the path of rapid and balanced growth – the party shall redouble its efforts to mobilize popular support for them. There is a need for both the government, the party and our allies in the NDA to effectively communicate to the people that today's temporary hardships will pave the way for a better tomorrow.'

Needless to add, large chunks of the BJP constituency remain far from convinced that 'temporary hardships' would bring 'a better tomorrow'. A leading ideologue, K. Govindacharya, has already gone out, on 'study leave', and has since spoken out against the demands of globalization. Also, the NDA arrangement ensures that avowed 'populists' like Ram Vilas Paswan and Sharad Yadav preside over the corporatisation/privatization of their respective economic backyards.

On its part, the Congress Party found itself having to renegotiate the agenda of economic reforms in the context of globalization. It has concluded a three-month 'introspection' exercise and has, more or less, endorsed the path its government chose to travel in 1991. Indeed, for all their pronounced reservations, the left parties too were happy – and will be happy again – to be part of the United Front arrangement that allowed P. Chidambaram to carry on the liberalization/privatization agenda.

In the months to come the Indian polity will find itself subjected to much greater turbulence than it experienced in the Mandir/Masjid/Mandal phase. The political leadership, across party lines, would be called up to reinforce the efficacy of the Indian state so as to re-energize the governing institutions.

6 Claude Smadja, Facing the New Benchmarking Challenge For India, India Economic Summit 2000, in New Delhi, 27 November 2000.

BJP: up for grabs

SWAPAN DASGUPTA

'It is ideology alone which sparks enthusiasm in the party workers and reinforces their commitment to idealism. Also, an ideology is needed to establish a political party's distinct individuality.'

Report of Working Group to
BJP National Executive in Bhopal,
July 1985

'This is a party of idealism. Ideology is our strength. Idealism is also our strength. Our idealism is nationalism. You should not identify this or that programme or issue with the ideology. These are consequential to them. However, the fundamental ideology is nationalism. For us, nationalism is above everything. Nation first and then only party. The nation-first party.'

L. K. Advani speech to the BJP
National Council in Nagpur,
August 2000

THERE is something like a great scare that precedes the result of every general election in India. In 1998, even as the mass of urban voters were enthused by the prospects of a BJP government led by the genial and affable Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a sense of nervousness was visible among the rarefied cosmopolitan classes. In the party circuits of Mumbai and Delhi, it was fairly common to encounter Indians working in multinational undertakings swearing they would emigrate if the BJP won the election. 'They are a backward lot, they will take the country back to the medieval ages,' was the refrain.

Today, another election later and with Vajpayee nearing three uninterrupted years in office, those notables haven't become NRIs. The MNCs are content with the prevailing order and there is talk of India joining the league of economic superpowers. If there is dissatisfaction, it is primarily in the ranks of the saffron faithful who struggled hard for two decades and more to transform the BJP from a fringe phenomenon to the largest party in the

Lok Sabha. The Swadeshi Jagran Manch, an outfit promoted by the RSS, has spoken of launching a 'second war of Independence', and in a fit of rhetorical exuberance a veteran RSS leader even referred to Vajpayee as a *gaddar* (traitor).

Being part of a larger family whose every movement and pronouncement is dissected and over interpreted, the BJP's apparent convulsions have become the subject of intense speculation. If party president Bangaru Laxman is to be believed, the BJP is undertaking a transition from 'Hindu nationalism' to 'nationalism'. If the die-hard secularists are to be believed, the turbulence is a wonderfully contrived sham. The RSS, according to them, wants to keep its foothold in the opposition space so that if something goes wrong, the BJP can revert to its moorings. And there is a third school – with a disproportionate representation in the permanent bureaucracy and an ill-informed English language media – that juxtaposes Vajpayee, the moderate and modernizer, against L. K. Advani, the hardliner and Hindu nationalist.

For those interested in history – and the past is very important in the BJP's self-perception – almost every contemporary trend has a precedent. When it was established in 1980, the BJP didn't set out to become a renamed version of the old Jan Sangh. It wanted to be a more cohesive and disciplined version of the Janata Party that emerged before the 1977 election with the blessings of Jayaprakash Narayan. No wonder, and despite the serious misgivings of leaders like Vijay Raje Scindia, it embraced a mysterious doctrine called 'Gandhian socialism' which was to coexist with

its very own, home grown 'integral humanism'

Equally, the BJP in 1980 didn't comprise entirely of old Jan Sanghis and those with RSS links. There was a conscious attempt to reach out to people like Ram Jethmalani, K S Hegde, Sikander Bakht and Viren Shah. In other words, the constant cooption of people from other political traditions was central to the BJP's bid to project itself as the national alternative to the Congress. The induction of politicians from the Janata Dal and the Congress between 1994 and 1998 wasn't symptomatic of opportunism as some purists made it out to be. It followed the logic of the BJP's bid to be more than the Jan Sangh.

Paradoxically, the establishment of a more wholesome version of the Janata Party wasn't at the cost of the RSS. Indeed, it was the 'dual membership' issue that provoked the split of 1980. There is an umbilical cord that links the BJP to the RSS. The debate in the party is not over ties to the RSS but the extent of functional autonomy the BJP should enjoy, what Vajpayee has frequently described as the *Lakshman rekha*. Advani raised secularist hackles by referring to the RSS as a 'moral influence' on the BJP. He even compared the position of the RSS leadership to that of Mahatma Gandhi in the post-Independence Congress. What was implied is that 'moral influence' need not extend to direct political control. After all, both Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel consulted Gandhi frequently between 1947 and 1948, but rarely did his pronouncements translate into actual policy.

In actual terms, the relationship between the RSS and BJP has never followed a uniform pattern. Gurujī M S Golwalkar, for example, was somewhat disdainful of politics. He

saw the Jan Sangh as a fraternal body that could provide an outlet to those *swayamsevaks* with a political bent. He rarely involved himself with the nitty-gritty of the political process. Balasaheb Deoras – working through his brother Bhaurao Deoras – and Rajendra Singh (Rajju Bhairya) were different. They were both deeply interested in politics and played a major role in guiding the destiny of the BJP, particularly during the Ayodhya movement.

Vajpayee, for example, nurtures the resentment that it was the RSS that steered the BJP away from coalition politics after the Vrindavan conclave of 1982. Likewise, there was a clear RSS hand in Murlī Manohar Joshi's inability to secure a second term as party president in 1993. And, as chief minister of Rajasthan, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat's manoeuvrability was severely circumscribed by constant needling at the behest of the RSS.

However, it is worth keeping in mind that the extent of RSS involvement in the BJP has depended very largely on the ability of individual leaders to manage the relationship. When Vajpayee was party president between 1980 and 1984, there was dissatisfaction in the ranks over his repeated attempts at coalition building. In 1983, for example, the establishment of a National Democratic Front of the BJP and Charan Singh's Lok Dal wasn't favoured by either the party rank and file or the RSS. Yet, Vajpayee got his way because he had the stature to impose his will.

Similarly, when Advani announced in early 1996 that Vajpayee would be the party's prime ministerial candidate, he did so unilaterally and without consulting Rajju Bhairya. There was skepticism in the senior BJP leadership and the RSS over the wisdom of the move. But Advani –

who based his decision on Vajpayee's ability to draw in more coalition partners and secure an incremental vote – stood his ground. Indeed, Advani quite openly faulted Vajpayee for heeding K S Sudarshan's late-night advice in 1998 and not inducting Jaswant Singh as the finance minister. That reversal sent out very wrong signals and disturbed the BJP-RSS equilibrium during the 13-month Vajpayee government. The balance was restored after the 1999 election.

The broad lesson to be drawn from this brief survey of BJP's history is that there is no one pattern. The party definitely enjoys a special relationship with the RSS but the management of this relationship is eminently negotiable. It has become even more so with the acquisition of political power by the BJP. Today, despite the latter's awesome cadre strength and the range of its activities, the BJP is actually much bigger than the RSS. Though the BJP still needs the discipline and dedication of ordinary *swayamsevaks* during elections, in social terms it encompasses a much larger section of Hindu society than does the RSS.

The constantly waning appeal of the RSS *shakha*, the inability of its leadership to look beyond a culture of asceticism and self-denial, and the craving of the ordinary *swayamsevak* for the influence and authority that comes with political power are some of the factors responsible for the BJP's success in overshadowing the RSS. From being a virtual extension counter of the RSS, the BJP has moved on. The RSS will continue to be an important input in the BJP but it will no longer be the decisive input. The trend is irreversible although it may be a few years before the RSS leadership acknowledges the phenomenon formally.

In fact, it is rapidly becoming a misnomer to talk of a single RSS lobby.

in the BJP. There are many swayam-sevaks but a diminishing number of them look to Nagpur for daily guidance. They are increasingly being guided by political impulses in which the acquisition and retention of power is the primary consideration. An examination of the factional alignments during the 2000 organisational polls in the BJP would show that far from there being a single RSS lobby, there are many lobbies where swayam-sevaks are leading lights. Even full-time RSS *pracharaks* deputed to the BJP don't appear to be following any common agenda and some of them are openly at loggerheads with it.

Not that the BJP leadership didn't anticipate the problem. One of the great dilemmas Hindu nationalism has faced is that there is no obvious link between Hindutva and governance. Hindutva is primarily an emotional commitment to cultural norms and a way of defining national identity. Its importance is paramount when issues centred on these themes top the national agenda, as happened during the Ayodhya movement. However, in more normal times, Hindutva isn't a guide to action. It may be, as Advani said in 1994, the BJP's 'ideological mascot' but that's of little help in providing *suraj* or good governance. When political power was a distant dream, the BJP could afford to gloss over these shortcomings. No longer.

The deft bid to replace 'Hindu nationalism' with 'nationalism' and 'ideology' with 'idealism' are symptomatic of the leadership's bid to take the party beyond Hindutva. But it is an uphill task. Apart from a loose and nebulous commitment to deregulation, decentralisation and *swadeshi*, economics was never a critical part of the party's agenda. Party notables, all bound by a common faith in Hindutva, have been unable to arrive at any

meaningful consensus over economics. Constituency compulsions, social background and narrow vested interests have played a part in determining individual stands on the Vajpayee government's rush to discard India's socialist legacy.

There is, for example, little in their stands to suggest that Arun Jaitley and Uma Bharati belong to the same party. One speaks the language of Thatcherism, the other of radical left populism. No wonder the government's reforms have followed a top-down diktat thrust. Consultation and democratization of decision-making carries the risk of dissensions at various levels. In her vocal intervention at the Nagpur national executive meeting in August 2000, Sushma Swaraj gave a foretaste of this. 'If you want the party to spread the word about the government's good work in the economic sphere, shouldn't the government first convince us?' she asked.

For the moment these complexities have been glossed over. The assertion of Indian pride at the global level – the nuclear status of India, the achievements in information technology – and strengthening national security have been stressed because these are concerns dear to the BJP constituency. But sooner or later other issues will have to be confronted. The RSS has already begun questioning the erosion of national sovereignty under the WTO regime. RSS chief Sudarshan has imbibed the mass of literature circulated by the anti-WTO protesters in Seattle and is busy disseminating that message in the shakhas. The RSS has also linked nationalism with uncompromising opposition to foreign investment in consumer goods.

These issues have a gut appeal to many who entered the BJP via the RSS but the response among the BJP's

middle class supporters is more mixed. A large section of them expect the party and its government to come out openly in favour of public sector disinvestment, a low tax regime and minimum government interference in daily life. They have little sympathy for the RSS' advocacy of a spartan society governed by curbs on consumption. Their vision of nationalism is that of an assertive India completely at ease with Indian values combined with western technology and consumption patterns. A vision that mirrors the experience of the very successful Indian diaspora, particularly in the US.

The extent to which the BJP will succeed in incorporating these aspirations into its formal agenda of governance will depend very substantially on the economic record of the Vajpayee government. The greater the urbanization of India and greater the growth of the middle classes, the more the modernizers in the BJP will prevail. Conversely, an economic setback will propel the traditionalists into the forefront.

For the BJP, the experience of the Vajpayee government is going to be critical. Having already established its Hindu nationalist credentials, it is desperately looking for add-ons to enhance its appeal. It is making the transition from being a vibrant protest movement into becoming a governing coalition. This won't happen if it shapes itself into a doctrinaire ideological grouping, either committed to market economics or national capitalism. To be successful, political parties in India have to be grand coalitions but with distinctive personalities. The BJP has acquired a distinct personality and a defined ethos. It is now in search of causes that can blend idealism with good electoral politics.

It's a party still in the making and up for grabs.

One party, many voices

MAHESH RANGARAJAN

THE dying moments of the year 2000 found the ruling National Democratic Alliance in New Delhi in a mood of uncertainty, with the 'consensus' that cemented the 24 party coalition under strain. Contrary to expectations, it was not the contradiction between the BJP and its regional allies that increased concerns about the viability and coherence of the government. It was the sharpening of ideological debate within saffron ranks that acted as a catalyst. Having pushed contentious issues under the carpet for the better part of two years, leading lights in the party have decided to bring them out into the open. At another level, disquiet over the possible fallout of globalisation has led some ideologues to publicly voice concerns about the fate of *swadeshi*.

On both counts, secularism and *swadeshi*, being in office has only sharpened the gap between precept and practice. Heading a multi-party alliance government has not made things easier. All the more, when key allies such as those in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are due to face state assembly polls a few months from now, and may well be made to account for the actions or utterances of their larger partner.

The slowdown in the economy, both in industry and, as a result of the drought, in agriculture, could not have come at a worse time. In the absence of a 'feel good' factor, the pressure on government will only mount. Yet, given the ideologically grounded nature of the BJP, it is the ways in which its leaders perceive issues that will be central to the manner events play out in the coming months.

It all began with the Union home minister's presence at the huge camp held in Agra to commemorate the 75 years of the existence of the parent organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. There was a new hint of steel in L. K. Advani as the government at the Centre entered its second year. Only a few weeks earlier, at the Nagpur conference of the party, a new line of moderation had seemed in the ascendant. Muslims, in the words of Bangaru Laxman, the first southerner and Dalit to head the party since its inception, were 'the flesh of our flesh and the blood of our blood'.

The Congress-like umbrella seemed to be passing into Hindutva hands: recognise our power and we will be your protectors. Even the massacre of pilgrims in Anantnag and subsequent attacks by *mujahids* in the valley did not make the government slacken its search for a new dialogue with militants. The doubters were silenced and Prime Minister Vajpayee seemed firmly in command. Since Agra, however, we appear to have entered a new phase of uncertainty. Or rather of the anxieties fuelled by the BJP's public espousal of its old certainties.

The polity as a whole will be affected by any shift of power equations in the Bharatiya Janata Party. Nothing was as notable about Vajpayee than his willingness, for the first time in many years, to move if ever so slightly to grasp in his hands the rhetoric that so many of his colleagues excel at but which he normally shuns. First came his declaration at Staten Island, New York that he was a *swayamsevak* first and foremost. As a former editor of

Panchajanya and a pupil of the late Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, he could scarcely have ever said anything else. But the timing and manner of the statement was significant.

The rich and influential community of non-resident Hindu India responded warmly to his peroration. By December, the temple had climbed back onto the agenda. It was 'an unfinished task' for the prime minister even as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad got all set to move to the next stage of construction of the temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya itself. This was not the first time he had played a saffron card while in office. Two years ago, he had called for a national debate on conversions while visiting the Dangs district in Gujarat. As if to complete the role reversal, Advani went to the *dargah* of the Chishtis in Ajmer.

But the Ram temple issue is different. It was the centrepiece of the party's bid to carve out a distinctive ideological space for itself in the late 1980s, it also formed the fulcrum of unity between the non-BJP parties in the United Front coalitions of 1996-98. No single issue – not Kashmir, not personal law – has ever animated sectarian divisions the way this dispute has.

It is easy to ascribe the shift in equations to the poor performance of the party in the urban local body elections in Uttar Pradesh. In many towns, its vote banks among the upper castes simply collapsed. Even the Congress did far better than in the past. True, the voter cast a plague on all parties. But given the rock solid base the Hindutva groups had built for themselves in the towns and cities, the results must have come as a shock.

But, U P only sets the immediate context. It cannot explain why Vajpayee took the initiative. The other, more convincing explanation is that given the absence of alternatives for

his regional allies, Vajpayee decided to continue his party's bid to enlarge its own field of play. The BJP's participation in coalitions has often seen it turn weakness to virtue by taking every inch of public space available to propagate its own worldview.

Just when independent commentators were trying to work out the reasons behind the *Laxman rekha* at Nagpur, the prime minister steered the ship back on course. There is little doubt that by his words he has at one fell swoop rallied the entire Sangh Parivar and all its front organisations behind him. He stands out as their ultimate trump card, the real mascot of an advancing assault on what they like to call the crumbling legacy of 'pseudo-secularism'. What makes this prosaic is the background of the Advani-Vajpayee relationship, in which the latter plays the 'moderate' to the former's 'extremism'.

Few individuals have had as long and eventful a political partnership as the two men at the helm of the saffron party. For decades, they have complemented each other – the one with a mellow, moderate image and the other with a reputation for telling it like it is. Their membership of the parent organisation goes back many years. Vajpayee joined before the outbreak of the Second World War, Advani in 1942, the year of the Quit India movement.

Few analysts go a step further. Both men have a lineage of service to the Sangh in former princely states. But the prime minister cut his political teeth in two cities. Lucknow, with its rich composite culture and the kingdom of Gwalior, neither ever a hotbed of communal tension. But Advani was a Sindhi victim of Partition whose assignment lay in Alwar, a rare north Indian state marked by vigorous ethnic cleansing. So far-

reaching was the process that even VP Menon condemned it. It was here, in the highly charged climate of Alwar, that Advani began his slow ascent to the top. The difference is not in ideology but in the approach to specific issues. Perhaps it reflects a critical period in their formative years, before they formed the now famous partnership.

It may explain why the veteran Communist Hiren Mukherjee could address Vajpayee with the words, 'My dear Atal', in an open letter in 1979. Such an epithet would be unthinkable for any other member of his party. In its search for a place in the polity, the RSS had to go beyond the charmed circle of the Maharashtrian Brahmins who had formed and led it through long years. It is perhaps no mere coincidence then that the two most significant figures it has put on the national stage should embody two very different ways of furthering its ideology. One builds on the bitterness of the 1940s on both sides of the border, the other underplays it. Neither may differ on the fundamentals, but their paths to the goal have often been different.

As long as the Bharatiya Jan Sangh was a minor player in Indian politics, much of this did not matter. Both served in the first non-Congress regime under Morarji Desai. There the differences begin to emerge in the public eye. True, they had more to do with style, but they also had some relation to substance. The external affairs portfolio brought out the pragmatist in Vajpayee, with a strong emphasis on the basic continuity in foreign policy. Defending what had seemed abhorrent to him while on the opposition benches was not a problem. Advani soon ran into heavy weather, earning brickbats for 'packing' the state-owned media with saf-

from fellow travellers. The break-up of the Janata Party was as much about jobs for the boys as about differences in ideology.

When they launched the BJP in the summer of 1980, it was clear whose line took precedence. Having been in a loose coalition, the Sangh now wanted to be free of the encumbrance of the socialists who would question its own sway. But the focus lay on stepping into the Congress' shoes. Even when the latter appropriated the saffron card, Vajpayee held back. Once the drift set in, the parent body switched to supporting the Congress tricolour. In turn, it was hailed as a 'nationalist organisation' by the general secretary of the Congress, Shrikant Verma. By the end of the eighties, that phase was over and the BJP took to the streets with the Ram Mandir issue. Congress-like postures gave way to khaki uninterrupted.

Succeed all this did and beyond all expectations. The soft-spoken former editor matured into a demagogue overnight. On his return to Ayodhya following his release from confinement in Bihar in late 1990, Advani was introduced to the audience as 'India's future prime minister'. But that was not to be. Like a genie out of a box, Narasimha Rao had the hawala cases registered. A perceptive reporter present at one of the first public rallies in support of Advani made a striking observation. He was still in charge, but the body language had changed. The former foreign minister was back at the helm of things.

In a sense, this has also reflected the electoral dilemmas of the party. To go that last and final step it needed to use the *mukhota* or mask. Much time, effort and energy has been expended on finding out how true a believer the man is. But this misses a deeper point. Namely, that to rule India, there is no

alternative to the politics of accommodation. If one wanted to sound mathematically proficient, we could argue that the lowest common multiple is what can hold a government or, for that matter, the country together. Nothing else works.

Each of the three Vajpayee governments has been a coalition. Sushma Swaraj once called the United Front a twelve-headed monster. The only way to replace it was for the saffron party to cobble together an apple cart of its own. And as early as 1996, the President's address contained no references to three most publicly controversial aspects of the Hindutva agenda.

It is not clear where that leaves the Union home minister. At one level, the slow saffronisation of society in general, the media and the middle classes even more so, makes it easier for the country to come to terms with him. The central ground of politics has indeed shifted. But the inescapable problem is that the very features that make an Advani-like figure so attractive to his party make him a liability for its allies. He prefers 'the hard state' in a society known for its fluidity and openness. No wonder he has tried so hard to square the circle, by emphasising how 'governance precedes ideology'.

No wonder that the same home minister who expressed disquiet about the Kandahar hostages deal was silent at the sight of his home secretary posing with masked militants of the Hizbul Mujahideen. Conversely, his first overseas visit was to Israel where he publicly proclaimed that the two countries shared a common problem: cross-border terrorism. Such polemics have had an unintended effect. On his own visit to Israel, the External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, widely seen as a 'moderate', berated Muslim vote bank politics for holding

India's foreign policy hostage for several decades. Having set the markers, Advani needs to do little more. Given the lay of the land for the votaries of Hindutva, his colleagues often have no option but to play the same game.

There is a second related issue which springs directly from his oft-made observation that the BJP is now 'a natural party of power'. Anyone would agree that the road to economic reform is littered with difficult, unpopular decisions that will pinch the purse before they spread the wealth around, if at all. Through its dizzying ascent in the nineties, the party was out of power most of the time. Whenever in office for a full term, it failed to reconcile the gap between the imperative for market-friendly reform and the need to generate fresh welfare schemes for its own survival.

Even its recent setbacks in the Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat local polls are a reflection of this fact. In the former, it has yielded significant ground to its arch rival, the Samajwadi Party, particularly in the small towns that are so crucial to political mobilisation in the state. Over time, the party's stranglehold on various levels of government in Gujarat did not deliver results. Targeting Christians was an easy option given such a record of poor governance. Equally so in Uttar Pradesh, where party managers never lost sight of the fact that the only time they secured a clear majority was in 1991 in the wake of the temple agitation. Far from moderating its manner, the compulsions of politics have driven the party to experiment ever more boldly with direct mobilisation for the cause. And what better way to do so than to begin some symbolic work at Ayodhya while there are still BJP-led coalitions in power in both Lucknow and New Delhi?

There is little doubt that the Sangh has been seriously exploring the option of reviving the line of explicit Hindutva. It is possible that this is mere preparation for the post-Vajpayee phase. Such was the message of its Agra conclave. It may, however, be some consolation to those who view this prospect with concern, that the same record played twice does not sound quite as good. The question of questions was and is whether the Vajpayee period will deprive the movement of its core message and leave it directionless much like its prime opponent now is.

It is precisely to check such a sense of drift and to embolden his rank and file that Vajpayee spoke up on the Ram temple issue. Despite the wishful thinking of latecomers to the bandwagon, he has never been anything but a firm believer in the tenets and principles of Hindutva. The practical politician in him, with decades long experience in public life, was willing to de-emphasise ideology in order to stitch together an alliance. But that is not the same as surrendering ideology.

In fact, the Vajpayee approach has accomplished more than the *rath yatra* brand of mobilisation in two distinct ways. The precedent lies in the way that the Congress in the provincial ministries of 1937-39, wooed the civil service and the business community with its 'moderation' and 'spirit of compromise'. The BJP too has used its spell in power to reach out to significant but highly influential groups in the government and among the intelligentsia to gain a legitimacy it lacked in the past.

Further, the positional warfare the Sangh is so adept at requires that it not only hold office but also control the key ministries of internal security, culture, information and education. It is a Vajpayee as head of the coalition

that enables Murlī Manohar Joshi to advance saffron agendas in education faster than many realise, and let an Advani try and change the discourse about national security in significant ways. By eschewing the big issues, the Sangh advances on a number of fronts. The party with a difference gains more when it adopts a low-key approach. By neutralising lower caste leaders like Paswan and Nitish Kumar, it sows dissension in the ranks of those who in the past led upsurges against its own brand of mass politics.

The National Democratic Alliance may well continue in power due to the absence of a visible alternative. But the BJP has served notice that it will not sit back and watch its agenda diluted to nothingness. Whether or not its allies distance themselves, as they most certainly may have to, this will act as a stimulus to efforts at opposition unity. The Congress is still unclear but the decks are being cleared for a revamped Third Front.

But the key lies not so much with the sectarian versus pluralism debate as in the economic realm. Even the seasoned hands at the head of the BJP, who have been so adept at running rings round their secular critics, will not find it easy to explain away the rise in prices of food and fuel. The former General Secretary K N Govindacharya hopes to capture the opposition space by providing a release valve for critics of reform. He has an uphill task given his close association with today's rulers.

It is now up to the forces opposed to them to forge more than a front and come up with a workable programme that gives them a sense of purpose. There are indeed many voices in the ruling combine, more so in the Sangh Parivar. But over the last year, they all seem more out of touch with the popular mood than in a long, long time.

Two parties, two faces?

VIR SANGHVI

IT is always easy – in retrospect – to pick a point when things start to go wrong for a government. Sadly, it is never easy to identify this moment when it actually happens. Looking back, we can say that VP Singh was done for when he delivered that demagogic Independence Day address in which he promised to implement the Mandal Commission's recommendations. At the time, however, most political commentators hailed the address for its sagacity and shrewdness.

Similarly, it is easy to say now that H D Deve Gowda dug his own grave when he asked the CBI to implicate as many Congressmen as possible in criminal cases. The fear of going to jail led Sitaram Kesri to topple the government and consign Deve Gowda to the kind of obscurity that, many would argue, he so richly deserved. But once again, Deve Gowda's strategy was regarded as a master-stroke when it was first implemented.

Another instance when we think of Narasimha Rao's legal troubles these days we trace the fall back to *Hawala*. This was a man, we say, who tried to manipulate the system to fix his political opponents and now he is hoist with his own petard. In fact, when Rao's CBI filed the *Hawala* chargesheet, the conventional wisdom was that it was L K Advani who was finished. Rao, said the pundits, would go on forever.

So, I hesitate to pick a point at which the fortunes of the NDA government began to change. When A B Vajpayee took office for the second time, I predicted (privately, of course, I am not stupid enough to put that kind of prediction into print where it can come back to haunt me!) that the honeymoon would last till April. All governments, I said, had about six months in which to make their mistakes. After that, the electorate would forgive nothing.

Needless to say, I was quite wrong. The honeymoon continued way past April and when Vajpayee went to America in the summer he was, without a doubt, the most popular Indian prime minister in 15 years. Given all this, you would be well advised to treat any predictions I make with extreme scepticism. But I will, nevertheless, stick my neck out on this one.

My guess is that when the history of this government is written we will remember this winter as the point when the honeymoon finally ended.

The BJP is not one party, there are two BJPs. There is the one that Atal Bihari Vajpayee founded in 1980 in Bombay. This was supposed to be a centrist party that inherited the space vacated by the old Janata party. Vajpayee took a deliberate decision not to call it the Jan Sangh again because

he believed that a Hindu party could never occupy the principal Opposition space—let alone the seat of power. His BJP was the successor to the old Janata party, shorn of the Charan Singhs and Jagjivan Rams.

My guess is that the strategy could have worked. I don't think that the BJP could have toppled Indira Gandhi in 1984 but it certainly would have been a major Opposition party. Two things went wrong. The first was that Vajpayee's BJP did not accurately represent the real views of its membership. At the Bombay Convention in 1980, the Rajmata of Gwalior took umbrage at the phrase 'Gandhian socialism' and her supporters had it deleted from the political resolution. (The Rajmata said she was against any kind of socialism. Wags said that the RSS was against any reference to Gandhi.)

Within two years, a lobby, associated with the RSS and such hardliners as the Rajmata and the then still-emerging L. K. Advani, was trying to dissociate itself from Vajpayee's overly centrist approach. Such mainstays of the Sangh as Nanaji Deshmukh made their displeasure public, even urging people to vote for the Congress and not the BJP in 1984. Worse still, for the moderate Vajpayee faction, it was the Congress, under Indira Gandhi, that was playing the Hindu card.

But while the RSS had alienated the Muslims with this approach, Indira Gandhi had found a new twist. By targeting Sikhs, she had managed to evoke Hindu passions and still retain the Muslim vote. As Hindus began praising the Congress, the hardliners in the BJP argued that Vajpayee had turned the new party into a pallid remake of the Congress while handing the Hindu vote to Indira Gandhi on a platter.

As if all this was not enough, a second factor then emerged. On 31 October, two Sikh guards assassinated Indira Gandhi. Anti-Sikh riots (or more accurately, pogroms) broke out all over India and in several cases the angry Hindu mobs were led by Congress leaders. By the time an election was called in the winter of 1984-85, everything that could go wrong for Vajpayee's BJP had gone wrong. The Hindus had lined up behind the Congress. The RSS had turned its back on the BJP. There was a sympathy wave following Indira Gandhi's assassination. And Rajiv Gandhi's charisma dominated the election.

To Vajpayee's horror, his party won two seats in Parliament. He lost his own election.

A second BJP then grew out of the ashes of Vajpayee's centrist party. Nobody is clear whose idea it was to open the locks of the disputed Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. But the consensus is that it was Arun Nehru who, after the Congress' role in the Delhi riots, believed that the party could consolidate the Hindu vote.

This was a foolish notion because the essence of Indira Gandhi's success lay in finding an electorally-marginal target (Sikhs, the foreign hand, the syndicate) to unite both Muslims and Hindus in one vote bank. Once the Congress got into the politics of Hindu versus Muslim, it was sunk.

In fact, this is precisely what happened. The militant assertions of Hindu nationalism found an echo in the Muslim community where a newly-aggressive leadership began to focus on social and religious issues. Muslim personal law, the right not to pay maintenance to wives, the offence caused by *The Satanic Verses*, and so on. At first, Rajiv tried to take a 'modern' line (there should be one personal law for

all communities), but as the pressures grew, his basic secularism kicked in.

Far from consolidating the Hindu forces unleashed by such decisions as the opening of the Ayodhya locks, he actually offended them. The newly-assertive Hindu community looked on with horror as he emphasised the right of Muslims to have their own personal law and cheerfully banned *The Satanic Verses*. This man is pampering the Muslims, the Hindus decided.

This situation represented a heaven-sent opportunity for any genuinely Hindu party. But there was a problem. Not only had the BJP ceased to be such a party but it was also a badly demoralised outfit. Vajpayee, always a sensitive man, had taken his defeat personally and retreated into an extended sulk. The BJP had virtually no presence in Parliament and its cadres, dominated by RSS types, were convinced that the experiment with moderation had failed.

It was at this stage that the second BJP emerged. Led by L. K. Advani and backed by the forces who had opposed Vajpayee's attempts at moderation, it completely junked the centrist platform. Vajpayee had tried to distance his BJP from the RSS, Advani acknowledged his RSS roots and even invited the Sangh to send a theoretician (Govindacharya, a rather dour man who was always described in the press as the BJP's think-tank) to help provide guidance to the party.

There have always been deeply unpleasant Hindu nationalist organisations at the fringes of the RSS. Advani used them to test the efficacy of the new Hindu agenda. For instance, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a little-known organisation dedicated to a medieval ideology, organised an agitation at Ayodhya. The VHP told Hindus (the vast majority of whom

had never heard of the Babri Masjid) that Lord Ram had been born at this spot. In fact, said the VHP, an ancient temple marking his birth had stood on this spot. But the Moghul Emperor Babur had destroyed it and built the Babri Masjid on its ruins.

In historical terms, all of this was extremely dubious. There is some doubt that Ram – at least as the VHP recognised him – ever existed at all. There is no evidence that he was ever born at that spot in Ayodhya. And the claim that a Hindu temple was destroyed to build the Babri Masjid is still a subject of archaeological controversy.

The VHP did not have to argue any of this out – the essence of medievalism is that there is no need for argument or scientific enquiry of any kind. But Advani recognised that he could not follow the same approach. So he came up with the following formulation: it does not matter whether Ram was really born there. It does not even matter whether he really existed or not. What matters is that Hindus think that this is true. And this is enough for us.

Why did this historically dubious appeal on the basis of a masjid that nobody had heard of take off all over India? The answer has to be that Advani realised that the Babri Masjid, in itself, was not of much consequence. Its importance was that it was a symbol of Hindu humiliation and Muslim dominance.

Look at it this way, the BJP would tell Hindus: for hundreds of years Muslims destroyed our temples, converted our people and ruled our country. Now, we are finally rid of most of them because they have their own Pakistan. Shouldn't we at least be allowed to feel proud of having got our country back? But we can't because the Congress continues to pamper

Muslims. It bends over backwards to accommodate their religious agenda. Every Imam represents a few lakh votes to these Congressmen. And as for us Hindus, we are taken for granted, second-class citizens in our own country.

In case anyone needed proof, there was the example of the Babri Masjid. The holiest figure in Hinduism had been born on this spot. Muslim invaders had desecrated his birthplace and sullied his memory. All Hindus were asking was this: give us back the spot, let us build a new temple there and we will help the Muslims to build a masjid wherever they want.

And guess what? Not only were these Muslims refusing to move even an inch, but Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress party were backing them! Are we living in India or are we living in Pakistan?

Put in those terms, the message had an undeniable impact. Suddenly, Hindus began using phrases like 'pseudo secularism' and 'second-class citizens in our own country'.

When he was sure that the movement was taking off, Lal Krishna Advani slid into the driving seat of a massive Toyota rath and took charge. The unsavoury Hindu outfits that had spearheaded the early offensive (the VHP, the Bajrang Dal) now became part of the entourage.

All this was so far removed from Vajpayee's vision of a centrist BJP that it was easy to see why he found no place in Advani's scheme of things. Nobody mentioned him, few people of consequence bothered to call on him, and he never once went to the masjid site in Ayodhya.

There are stories – and these, by definition, are based on hearsay – that Vajpayee told Advani that what he was doing was wrong, that it would all end

in tears, and even, that he was riding a tiger. That by the time he was ready to dismount, the movement would have eaten him up.

Nobody knows what the truth of these stories is. But the reality is that from 1986 to 1992, Atal Bihari Vajpayee was treated by this new BJP as no more than an avuncular figure who belonged to an earlier era. L. K. Advani was very much in control.

All this changed with the demolition of the Babri Masjid. According to one person who was present when the demolition squad brought down the first dome, Advani was totally distraught. After some RSS leaders tried to assure him that this was the will of Ram, a senior BJP leader was deputed to take him back to a room in a guest house.

According to this version, Advani was beside himself with grief. 'They have destroyed everything,' he kept repeating. His grief, of course, was not on account of the masjid, it was on account of himself. 'They have destroyed my movement,' he explained.

(Later, he was to expand on this theme in a signed article. It was the saddest day of his life, he wrote, because of the damage to the BJP's reputation for discipline. If he meant this, he was quite wrong. Only a trained and disciplined fascist organisation could have brought down the Babri Masjid as quickly and as skilfully as the BJP did that day.)

The demolition was followed by further tragedy. Riots spread all over India. And the Congress government of Narasimha Rao, either through ineptitude or yet another cynical attempt to win the Hindu vote, sat back while much of India burned. Hindus thought that the movement had gone too far. The Centre dismissed BJP state governments. When fresh elections were

held, the BJP found that it had lost its share of the vote

Vajpayee had been right. There was no sign of the mosque or the movement. But there was a smile on the face of the tiger.

If the BJP had to regroup and to recapture its momentum, then a new strategy had to be evolved. By then, the political battlefield was littered with the remnants of two different BJPs: Vajpayee's centrist outfit which lost in 1985 and Advani's Hindu grouping which was demolished in 1992.

Curiously, the strategy that the BJP adopted was closer to Vajpayee's centrist approach than to anything that Advani and his RSS friends had dreamt up. By then, the realisation had sunk in that if the party was ever to take office at the centre, it could only do so at the head of a coalition? But who would coalesce with a bunch of fascists, religious demagogues and mosque-breakers? If the BJP was ever to break through to national power then it would have to go back to the Vajpayee image of moderation.

By 1994-95, the political resurrection of A B Vajpayee had begun. To Advani's credit, he was the first to recognise this. With elections due in 1996, he declared that Vajpayee would be the party's candidate for prime minister. (It is often unfairly claimed that Advani only stepped aside after he was framed in the Hawala scandal. In fact he had proposed Vajpayee's name much before Hawala.) While the BJP did not disown its second, post-Ayodhya *avatar* or actually declare that it was returning to the 1980 version, it toned down some of its rhetoric and emphasised Vajpayee's charisma.

In 1996, an opportunity arose to measure the success of this transformation. The elections threw up a hung

Parliament with the BJP as its single-largest constituent. The President asked Atal Bihari Vajpayee to form the government. The BJP agreed and then found to its horror that not only would anybody refuse to join a BJP-led coalition, no party of consequence was willing to support the BJP from outside. After 13 days in office, Vajpayee resigned as prime minister before being defeated in a vote of confidence.

The failure of the 1996 experiment convinced the BJP that it could not remain Advani's party with Vajpayee's leadership. It needed to re-draft its agenda, to tone down the more communal aspects of its platform, and to appear to be more centrist if it was to appeal to allies. Once it had managed this, it would be more electable.

The BJP that won the following election wore the colours of Vajpayee's 1980 party. Calling itself a centrist alternative to the Congress, it followed an agenda that was almost identical to the one that Vajpayee had proposed in Bombay in 1980. By basing its appeal on Vajpayee's personal charisma, not only did the BJP attract support all over the country but it also managed to win the confidence of many regional parties that would never have dreamt of aligning with the Ayodhya-obsessed avatar of the BJP.

And yet, all was not well. Throughout the first few months of Vajpayee's reign, elements of the Ayodhya-era BJP kept raining on his parade. The VHP said it would construct a temple at Ayodhya anyway. The RSS, perhaps having been told to lay off Muslims, decided to persecute Christians instead. Priests were attacked, churches burnt and nuns raped. Vajpayee protested but nobody would listen.

Within the BJP, there was still no consensus on how to merge the two avatars of the party. Govindacharya

told a foreign diplomat that the BJP would continue to be Advani's baby. Vajpayee, he said, was just a mask (*mukhauta*). Similarly, when Vajpayee tried to select his Cabinet, he faced undue interference from the Sangh. Determined to appoint Jaswant Singh as his finance minister, he was forced to let the matter drop after K. Sudarshan, then the RSS' second-in-command, visited him to complain.

By the time the BJP lost Assembly elections in the crucial states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi, most people had given up on the party. A poll conducted by *India Today* showed that Sonia Gandhi was more popular than Vajpayee and the general view was that the marriage between the two BJPs had not only been rocky but that it was heading for the divorce courts.

We will never really know what happened in those anxious weeks after the Assembly defeats. But obviously, the leaders of the two BJPs and the Sangh sat down to do some tough talking. Their conclusion was reflected in their actions. From that point on, the Ayodhya avatar of the BJP disappeared from public view, the lunatic fringe of the Parivar was reigned in, and Vajpayee became all-powerful. It was almost as though 1984 had not happened and the 1980 version of the party had fast-forwarded itself to 1998. The BJP that ruled India was the centrist party that Vajpayee had tried to create in Bombay to occupy the space vacated by the old Janata party.

Few can deny that it worked. Vajpayee seemed so much in control that there was no question of raising the old secular objections to the Ayodhya avatar of the BJP. Even Advani moved towards the centre of the political spectrum and suggested that the media had caricatured his views.

by portraying him as an extremist and a hardliner. By the time the BJP won another election victory (after Kargil and a misconceived confidence motion), there was no doubt that the party was well on its way to occupying the old Congress space (not just the Janata space as had originally been intended) and that Vajpayee was a leader in the Nehruvian mould.

Why then do I say that this could be the turning point in the fortunes of this government? My guess is that the tacit understanding between the two BJPs is finally unravelling. It is not so much that the Sangh Parivar is seeking to embarrass Vajpayee, more that the strains of a mismatched alliance are beginning to show.

One instance of this tension is the Ayodhya controversy which paralysed Parliament for much of December. The furor had relatively innocuous origins. Vajpayee was asked about the Ayodhya movement by a few journalists as he was stepping out of Parliament House. He reiterated his disapproval of the manner in which the masjid was brought down and repeated that the construction of a temple was not on the NDA agenda.

All this was fair enough. But he also said that the Ayodhya movement was an expression of national sentiment that had remained unfinished. Because he spoke in Hindi, the potential for selective translation was immense. Some papers quoted him as saying that it was the aspiration of every Indian national to build a temple at Ayodhya. Others said that the use of the term unfinished agenda was ominous. Did he mean that the BJP intended to finish that agenda?

Vajpayee's view was that the controversy was uncalled for. Speaking at an *iftaar* party the following day, he sought to play down the uproar. The reference to the national movement,

he suggested, was a statement of fact. Whatever one's views on the Ram temple, there could be no denying that the movement for its construction was national in character. And as for it being unfinished, well, wasn't it? The temple had not been built.

Further, he said, there were two solutions to the matter. Either the courts decided or Hindus and Muslims sat across a table and settled the dispute through dialogue. This was unexceptionable enough. But then came the clincher. One solution, he suggested, would be if the Muslims accepted that there was once a Hindu temple on the spot and agreed to let them construct a Ram temple there. They could build a mosque somewhere else.

Nobody is certain why Atal Bihari Vajpayee said this. Surely he knew that he was merely restating Advani's position from the late 1980s? After all, what was the Ayodhya dispute about? Hindus wanted Muslims to move their mosque from the disputed site so that they could build a temple. Muslims refused and hence the need for an Ayodhya movement. To suggest the dispute itself as a solution to the problem made no sense.

Inevitably, the 'clarification' set off a new round of speculation. Vajpayee had raised the issue on purpose, said the commentators. Ayodhya was back on the agenda. The BJP had realised that Vajpayee's moderation might help it win allies and maintain a responsible national image. But to win Assembly elections – and U P goes to the polls next year – it needed Hindutva issues to enthuse its traditional vote bank.

Vajpayee kept insisting that he had been misunderstood. He had not raised the issue himself, he said, he had been asked questions. He had not suggested that a temple be built in

Ayodhya. He had merely listed one possible solution to the problem without in any way endorsing it. He had not changed his mind on Ayodhya in any significant sense.

Unlike most people in the media, I am inclined to believe Vajpayee. If he had wanted to associate himself with the Ayodhya movement, he would have done so in the 1980s. Instead, by publicly distancing himself from Advani's avatar of the BJP, he risked his own political career. So why would he now want to raise the issue?

But it is not Vajpayee's motives that intrigue me. It is much more that the response to this statement has been instructive. The honest thing for him to have done would have been to have got up in Parliament and said something like this: 'Look, I never approved of the Ayodhya movement. I don't believe that such communal issues take India forward. Fortunately, the issue seems to have died a natural death. Why, in God's name, do you want to revive the damn thing?'

The problem is that no matter how much the nation and his NDA allies want to hear him say this, the head of the BJP cannot rubbish the Ayodhya movement in public. Whatever his personal views, he is obliged to be silent about them and to take a moderate party line on communal issues. The deal seems to be: we'll agree to be Vajpayee's kind of party but only on the condition that he respects our agenda even if he isn't willing to implement it.

This was not the first time that Vajpayee had run into this kind of problem. As anybody who has cruised the internet will tell you, a surprisingly large number of non-resident Indians are Sangh Parivar supporters. Many of them live in the United States where they have made large sums of money. Their wealth and their detachment

gives them, or so they believe, the right to tell those of us who actually have to live in India how the country should be run. Their prescriptions are crude and simplistic: free enterprise and Hindu *rashtra*.

For such Parivar *wallahs*, a visit by a BJP prime minister to the United States was their moment of triumph. Against his better judgement, Vajpayee accepted an invitation to a Parivar function at Staten Island. Once he got there, he was horrified to find that speaker after speaker lambasted his government for refusing to implement the Hindutva agenda. Where was the *mandir*? What happened to the common civil code? Why weren't we invading PoK? And so on.

Pushed to the wall, Vajpayee fell back on a familiar formulation. The agenda could not be implemented, he said, because the BJP did not have a majority. As for himself, he may or may not be prime minister a year from now, but he would always be a *swayamsevak*. Both statements were factually accurate but unhelpful nevertheless. Yes, the allies would not let the BJP implement its agenda. But he did not say whether he supported that agenda himself. And as for being a *swayamsevak*, he had joined the RSS in his youth and never left. So technically, the statement was correct but it said nothing about the state of his relations with the Sangh.

His speech quietened the restive crowd but Vajpayee had not reckoned on the impact it would have back at home. No sooner had television networks broadcast the *swayamsevak* sound-byte than the phones began to ring at his suite in the Waldorf Astoria in New York. All the allies were demanding that he withdraw his remarks.

A perturbed Vajpayee issued an unconvincing clarification say-

ing that he had been quoted out of context. What he meant was that he was a *swayamsevak* of the nation. It was too late. The damage had been done.

My guess is that controversies like this will begin to recur at regular intervals. The Opposition has scented blood. It knows that Vajpayee's image throughout the country rests on the perception that he is a moderate. Equally, it knows that the compromise at the heart of the marriage of the two BJPs requires neither partner to speak ill of the other.

Ask Vajpayee a question about Ayodhya, common civil code, or any of the old Hindutva issues and he will not be able to go any further than it is not part of the NDA agenda. If the questions continue, he will have no choice but to make vaguely supportive remarks about the Hindutva position.

Once he does this, three things will happen. One: the allies will complain. Two: the Sangh Parivar will sink him by rejoicing in the streets and declaring (as it did after the Ayodhya remarks) that he was always a *swayamsevak* at heart. And three: the moderate image that keeps this government afloat will be tattered.

And yet it is hard to see what else he can do. If he gives vent to his own views and says that he has never supported the Hindutva agenda, then he loses the goodwill of his own party. The lunatic fringe of the Parivar is certain to end the ceasefire and to destabilise his government.

For over two years, the NDA regime has survived because Atal Bihari Vajpayee has walked this tightrope between the two BJPs. My feeling is that the tightrope walk cannot go on for much longer. And without Vajpayee's image, this government does not have a hope of surviving.

Clueless in Kashmir

PRAVEEN SWAMI

PARTICIPANTS in the political drama unfolding this winter in Jammu and Kashmir resemble nothing so much as a group of boys poking a sleeping tiger with a pointed stick, just to see what happens

Underlying what has come to pass for a peace process in Jammu and Kashmir is the assumption that dialogue is a good thing. This proposition is difficult to dispute, for the same reasons that it is impossible to assert that motherhood is a vice. But the media-fuelled euphoria generated by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's Ramzan ceasefire has veiled the deeply problematic processes on which the peace initiative is premised. While we have been inundated with detail on the participants in process, and are, thanks to television, made familiar with their public pronouncements on an hour-by-hour basis, there is still little understanding of the larger political context within which peace is sought to be brought about.

I shall argue here that the Bharatiya Janata Party's peace initiative has costs that transcend Jammu and Kashmir – implications for the future of India as a secular state which have largely been censored out of public debate. The price of peace now sought to be brought about could, paradoxically, prove higher than the admittedly horrific loss of life that takes place each day in the troubled state.

It has been clear for some time that the contours of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government's initiative in Jammu and Kashmir lie in the covert diplomacy that took place during the Kargil war. The content

of the larger political parameters of the government's Kashmir policy, of which the Ramzan ceasefire is just a part, has sadly passed almost unnoticed.

Writing in the Pakistani newspaper, *The Nation*, Talaat Hussain had reported that Niaz Naik and R K Mishra, the back-channel diplomatic negotiators who operated through the Kargil war, discussed what was called the 'Chenab plan'. The term was a reference to the 1950 plan put forward by the United Nations mediator on J&K, Owen Dixon, calling for a partition of the state along its communal-ethnic fault lines. It would have broadly cut apart Jammu and Kashmir along the Chenab river, with the predominantly Muslim areas to its north going to Pakistan, and its predominantly Hindu and Buddhist areas remaining in India.

According to Hussain's report, discussions between Mishra and Naik were documented in a Pakistani proposal, an Indian response, and a Pakistani counter-proposal. The idea was evidently in circulation at the time, for Pakistan's former Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, called in an article for 'deliberate incremental advances' towards a settlement in which 'the two sections of Kashmir would have open, porous borders'.

Efforts to realise a Dixon-style resolution to what is called the Kashmir problem continued apace after the Kargil war. On 8 March this year, Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah and a group of his top Cabinet colleagues held a closed-door secret meeting with Farooq Kathwari, a US-based

secessionist leader Kathwari heads the Kashmir Study Group (KSG), an influential New York think tank which has been advocating the creation of an independent state carved out of the Muslim-majority areas of J&K

The owner of Ethan Allen, an upmarket furniture concern which counts the White House among its clients, Kathwari's associates in the KSG have included influential Indian establishment figures, notably former Foreign Secretary S K Singh and retired Vice Admiral K K Nayyar. The furniture tycoon whose involvement in Jammu and Kashmir began after his son died in a camp run in Afghanistan to train cadre for the *jehad*, was earlier blacklisted by successive Indian governments, on one occasion being denied permission to visit a seriously ill relative. Shortly after the second BJP-led coalition took power in 1998, however, he was quietly granted a visa.

Kathwari arrived in New Delhi in March 1999, carrying a series of proposals for the creation of an independent Kashmiri state, compiled in a volume called *Kashmir: A Way Forward*. In September 1999, a fresh version of the document was finalised after, its preface records, receiving reactions from 'government officials in India and Pakistan'. The new document was even more disturbing than the first. At least one KSG member, the University of South Carolina's Robert Wirsing, refused even to participate in the discussions. Essentially, the new *Kashmir: A Way Forward* contained five proposals for the creation of either one or two new states, which would together constitute what is described in somewhat opaque fashion as a 'sovereign entity but one without an international personality'.

This 'new entity would have its own secular, democratic constitution, as well as its own citizenship, flag and

a legislature which would legislate on all matters other than defence and foreign affairs. India and Pakistan would be responsible for the defence of the Kashmiri entity, which would itself maintain police and gendarme forces for internal law and order purposes. India and Pakistan would be expected to work out financial arrangements for the Kashmiri entity, which could include a currency of its own.'

Four of the five possible Kashmiri entities the KSG discusses involve two separate states on either side of the LoC and territorial exchanges between India and Pakistan. But the fifth Kashmiri entity outlined in *Kashmir: A Way Forward*, of a single state on the Indian side of the Line of Control, is the most interesting of the KSG proposals. Premised on the assumption that Pakistan would be unwilling to allow the creation of a new entity on its side of the Line of Control – although there is no discussion of what would happen if India were to be similarly disinclined – the new state would come into being after a series of *tehsil*-level referendums. All the districts of the Kashmir valley, the districts of Kargil and Doda, three northern *tehsils* of Rajouri and one *tehsil* of Udhampur, the KSG believes, would choose to join the new Kashmiri state.

The KSG report attempts somewhat desperately to prove that its new state is not built on communal foundations. 'All these areas,' it argues, 'are imbued with Kashmiriyat, the cultural traditions of the Vale of Kashmir, and/or interact extensively with Kashmiri-speaking people.' But this argument is patently spurious, for several of these areas also interact similarly with peoples who do not speak Kashmiri.

There is no explanation, for example, of why the linguistic, cul-

tural and trade linkages the three northern Muslim-majority *tehsils* of Rajouri district have with the three southern Hindu-majority *tehsils* are of any less significance than those they have with the Kashmir region. Nor is it made clear what linguistic affiliation the *tehsils* of Karnah and Uri in Kashmir, where just 3.2% and 31% of the population were recorded as Kashmiri-speakers in the 1981 census, the last carried out in the state, might have with the valley.

Similarly, while Ramban and Bhaderwah *tehsils* in Doda are not Kashmiri-speaking and principally trade with Jammu, the KSG proposals make the *a priori* assumption that they would vote to join the new state. Indeed, these *tehsils* have recorded some of the highest voter turnout in successive elections from 1996, suggesting their residents have little sympathy for Kashmir valley-centred secessionist politics.

Abdullah has admitted meeting Kathwari, but claims to have little sympathy for his ideas. It is interesting, however, to note that the KSG's ideas suffuse the National Conference's own proposals for Jammu and Kashmir's future, the latter having striking similarities with those the KSG has floated. The controversial report of the Regional Autonomy Committee (RAC), tabled in the J&K Assembly last year and now in the process of being implemented, bears striking similarities with the KSG proposals. Muslim-majority Rajouri and Poonch are scheduled to be cut away from the Jammu region as a whole and recast as a new Pir Panjal province. The single districts of Buddhist-majority Leh and Muslim-majority Leh, too, will be sundered from each other and become new provinces.

In some cases, the RAC report and the KSG proposals mirror each

other down to the smallest detail. For example, Kashmir: A Way Forward refers to the inclusion of a Gool-Gulabgarh tehsil in the new state. There is, in fact, no such tehsil. Gool and Gulabgarh were parts of the tehsil of Mahore, the sole Muslim-majority tehsil of Udhampur district, until 1999. Gool subsequently became a separate tehsil. But the proposal for Mahore's sundering from Udhampur and inclusion in the Chenab province was first made in the RAC report. According to the RAC plan, as in the KSG proposals, Mahore would form part of the Chenab province, while Udhampur would be incorporated in the Hindu-majority Jammu province.

As significant, Abdullah's maximalist demands for autonomy for J&K dovetail with the KSG's formulation of a quasi-sovereign state. The report of the State Autonomy Commission (SAC), adopted by the J&K Legislative Assembly earlier this year, would leave New Delhi with no powers other than the management of defence, external affairs and communications. Fundamental rights in the Union Constitution, for example, would no longer apply to J&K if the SAC has its way. They would have to be substituted by a separate chapter on fundamental rights in the J&K Constitution, which now contains only directive principles.

The Supreme Court's and the national Election Commission's jurisdiction in the state would also end, and the State Election Commission would conduct polls in the state. While the National Conference's demands for greater autonomy aren't in themselves disturbing, the context in which they have been made and their character most certainly is. The US' enthusiastic endorsement of the autonomy report gives even more reason to be-

lieve it sees some variant of the KSG plan as the eventual solution to the Kashmir problem.

The National Conference isn't the only political formation that seems to see some kind of inevitability in the realisation of a reworked Dixon plan. The Hizb-ul-Mujahiddin's chosen mediator for its own August ceasefire, Fazl-ul-Haq Qureshi, gave a fairly fleshed out idea of what its vision of a negotiated settlement to violence in Jammu and Kashmir might constitute. In a 1 September interview to an internet news site, the People's Political Front leader said he had submitted formal plans for a quasi-independent Jammu and Kashmir to the Union government. 'The model,' Qureshi said, 'envisages a semi-sovereign status for Jammu and Kashmir, and joint control exercised by both India and Pakistan.'

It was lost on no-one that Qureshi's announcements closely mirrored proposals made by other Kashmir-based figures on the Islamic right. On 9 May, just a month before Dar came out with his ceasefire declaration, then APHC chief and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani had announced his organisation was 'not for the division of the state, (but) if in the talks the parties reach a consensus to divide the state, we will accept that.' This was a startling departure from the APHC's formal position. But, although power has since changed hands in the organisation, no one has flatly rejected the idea of a religion-based partition. Indeed, senior APHC figures have been telling journalists, off-record, that such a partition is the minimum concession they could accept.

Also of significance is the role of United States' diplomatic establishment in pushing not-dissimilar ideas. In May, US-based investment banker

and nuclear physicist Mansoor Ijaz had visited Srinagar, visiting top political figures there and in New Delhi through the offices of the Research and Analysis Wing. What he discussed during this visit, Ijaz outlined in a 22 November article in the *International Herald Tribune*.

Ijaz says he 'proposed a framework for dialogue to General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's military leader, and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, India's Prime Minister, that envisioned empowering ordinary Kashmiris, civilian and militant alike, as the central partners for peace.' 'The initiative,' Ijaz wrote, 'had backing from President Bill Clinton as an effective means for preventing the internal implosion of Pakistan at the hands of its Islamic zealots.' These efforts, Ijaz has claimed, led to the Hizb-ul-Mujahiddin ceasefire, which fell apart after Musharraf, under pressure from the Islamic right, 'developed cold feet.'

But Ijaz and the US diplomatic establishment renewed their efforts, and in August proposed a formula in which 'Pakistan would be brought to the negotiating table at the outset of political discussions after the ceasefire had taken hold, first bilaterally and then, at the Kashmiris' request, trilaterally. India's adamancy to not talk to Pakistan unless cross-border 'terrorism' stopped would disappear in the valley-wide ceasefire call from Salahuddin. He would receive critical support from General Musharraf to bring unruly Islamists on board, and General Musharraf in turn would get a much needed nod from Washington along with some much needed International Monetary Fund aid.'

As the dialogue process proceeded, Ijaz notes, 'India would agree to a significant, verifiable and permanent reduction of its forces in the

valley in exchange for a verifiable withdrawal of Pakistani militants. In the process, the Mujahiddin voice would be strengthened and unified, and Pakistan could take credit for having tangibly supported peace through its military advocacy of the Kashmiri cause. This framework, the businessman wrote, 'was agreed to by the Indians and, conditioned on Pakistan intelligence accepting it, by Salahuddin in late August. With virtually all of Islamabad's demands met, and an historic opportunity created to find a permanent solution, why has Pakistan not yet embraced it?'

Ijaz has been described by his critics as a windbag, claiming official US support where none exists. That Pakistan's de-escalation of hostilities along the Line of Control, and its new support of the Ramzan ceasefire followed the approval, on 30 November, of \$596 million International Monetary Fund standby facility, however, lends at least some credibility to the contours of his story. More important, Ijaz's emphasis on the need to save Musharraf from 'Islamic zealots' illustrates US concerns. Important US diplomatic figures have in the past suggested that the need to contain the right in Pakistan makes it necessary for India to make a unilateral concession.

In November 1999, Michael Krepon, who heads the influential Stimson Centre, argued that 'India's Kashmir policy has been predicated on the passage of time theory, and limited to counter-insurgency operations.' 'The question that needs to be asked,' he insisted, 'is whether or not this is working in India's favour, because as time passes, Pakistan is becoming weaker.' Thus, the US' de-facto mediation of post-Kargil conflict in Jammu and Kashmir seems premised on the belief that India will, eventually, agree

to some kind of quasi-autonomy, however packaged, for the Muslim majority areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

Where does the Union government stand in this complex, fluid political landscape? There's little doubt that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh would be more than delighted with what has come to be called the 'trifurcation' of Jammu and Kashmir into separate states of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Indeed, the RSS has said as much on several occasions, most recently at an 2 October rally in Jammu. A plethora of figures on the Hindu right, ranging from local Jammu politicians to national figures like Dogra royal scion Karan Singh, have at various points endorsed similar ideas.

Very little imagination is needed to see the structural similarities between trifurcation and the Kathwari project, since without a united, secular Jammu and Kashmir, claims for the valley to chart its own separate destiny would acquire momentum. Hindu and Islamic fascism, after all, are striking not only for their differences, but also for their unity. Union Home Minister L K Advani has distanced himself from the creation of three new states, but the fact remains that Vajpayee, along with Union External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, who is believed to be increasingly influential in charting Jammu and Kashmir policy, have said nothing on the subject.

Received wisdom has it that it would be impossible for the BJP to make such a unilateral concession on Jammu and Kashmir. The occasion of 6 December, however, is a good time to remember that the Hindu right has acted in unpredictable ways before. If it cannot do so in this case, it would appear that two sets of false assumptions are guiding the engagement of India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kash-

mir. Indian policy-makers seem to believe that economic desperation and US pressure will, sooner or later, compel Pakistan to accept a solution based on the conversion of the LoC into an international border. Indian officials believe that the most New Delhi can concede is broad federal autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir and, subject to the cessation of violence, free movement for residents across the LoC.

But Pakistan's military establishment sees things very differently. Criticism of India's human rights record in the media, and repeated assertions that the army is tiring of its internal security role, are seen as signs of a weakening resolve to hold the state. Sooner or later, Pakistani strategists seem certain, India will agree at least to a sundering of Jammu and Kashmir, something they can then market as a victory. These sharply varied visions of how events will play themselves out bode ill for any serious dialogue process.

As important, the configuration of Pakistan politics, specifically the compulsions faced by Musharraf, could push events in a direction drastically different from that peace process protagonists seem to envisage. For one, Musharraf has failed to realise the promises he made when taking power of ending corruption and reviving Pakistan's moribund economy. That means he is in no position to alienate senior army officials, many of them ideologically committed to the Islamic right, by engaging in a de-escalation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Then, there are signs of a broad coalescing of political forces against continued military rule. The grand alliance of Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party and Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League, though tentative, is beginning to take shape. The only political organisations

Musharraf can depend on for support are the right wing groups whose *raison d'être* is war in Jammu and Kashmir For Pakistan's Islamic right, a cessation of hostilities in J&K would plainly be disastrous Since most of these groups have no political role in Jammu and Kashmir, they would have no future should conflict end

Organisations like the Jamaat-e-Islami, Lashkar-e-Taiba, al-Badr and Jaish-e-Mohammadi have built their political and financial empires on the foundations of their war in Jammu and Kashmir While all these groups are offspring of the ISI's US-backed war in Afghanistan, many believe the tail now wags the dog Musharraf had to back down on each of his confrontations with the religious right after he took power – on issues ranging from the reform of Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws to efforts to rationalise taxation

Nor is it clear that US pressure in Pakistan will have either the intensity or effect many in the Indian policy establishment believe it will Despite its undisputed influence in Pakistan, the US has been unable to secure even limited objectives like the extradition of Osama bin Laden Although the US banned the terrorist organisation Harkat-ul-Ansar for its involvement in terrorism years ago, both that organisation and its successor offshoot, the Jaish-e-Mohammadi, continue to thrive in Pakistan The US also has, as Ahmed Rashid has pointed out, entrenched interests in the 'new great game,' the battle for control of central Asian oil, which has Pakistan and Afghanistan at its core Finally, the US is profoundly unlikely to risk alienating Pakistan, which is after all a nuclear power, to the point where it becomes hostile and desperate

So far, the signal achievement of the peace process has been to push the

National Conference to the right, and legitimise the worst kinds of reactionary elements active in J&K today An ironic situation has been created where the National Conference's wholly legitimate demands for federal autonomy have been ignored, and the Union government is instead, through its covert negotiators, engaged in dialogue with people who believe a shot through the knees is appropriate punishment for women who dare to wear trousers

As is evident from the SAC and RAC reports, the National Conference has been preparing itself for the eventual prospect of some kind of sun-dering of Jammu and Kashmir It is also competing with the APHC in adopting extreme postures against New Delhi and the security establishment in an effort to consolidate its constituency in the Kashmir valley This has been done at the expense of its historic secular principles, and by abandoning the party's aspirations to represent all the peoples of J&K and not just one region or ethnic-religious community

Since any deal the Union government engages in with the APHC must, of necessity, involve applying the cleaver to the National Conference's neck as well, a further rightward lurch in the party seems inevitable In the meanwhile, desperately needed debate on federal autonomy, both between the governments in Jammu and Kashmir and New Delhi, and between politicians of various shades of opinion in the state, has simply not come into being

A bird in hand, goes the old saying, is worth two in the bush

With the backroom boys busy in the bushes in search of peace, it is perhaps appropriate to wonder if the premises of our intellectual engagement with Jammu and Kashmir are

well-founded Part of the problem is that our understanding of the decade-long conflict in the state has become mired in received wisdom, and lacks a complex and nuanced understanding of the play of class, culture, community and ethnicity that drive violence in J&K today

The veteran Punjab communist leader Satyapal Dang recently suggested to me that the ways in which we have come to comprehend such conflicts is grossly inadequate For a decade, he pointed out, what was called the Punjab problem was understood to consist of several other problems – the sharing of river waters, the status of Chandigarh, the federal demands of the Anandpur Sahib resolutions, the scars of Operation Bluestar, and so on Yet, when peace did come about, Dang pointed out, none of these problems had in fact been resolved

One explanation was that pure coercion had put an end to the violence that began in the early 1980s Another possibility was that the real basis of the Khalistan movement, its ideological content and resistance to it, had not been understood properly The question is relevant in Jammu and Kashmir today Although Kashmir, as experts never cease to remind us, is not Punjab, it is not inhabited by Martians either

A real peace process in Jammu and Kashmir cannot be manufactured it needs to emerge from real political activity, not closed-door intrigue and diplomatic manoeuvre It will need mass mobilisation, and the creation of genuinely democratic fora in which issues, not deals, are discussed And it will need to foreground the diverse cultural, economic and democratic aspirations of the peoples of the state, not meaningless clichés Such a process, sadly, appears nowhere near even its beginning

Uttarakhand's challenge

PRADEEP KUMAR

THE creation of Uttarakhand (Uttaranchal) marks the end of one stage in the process of granting political autonomy to the Himalayan belt. The 27th state fulfils the aspirations of the hill people who for a long time harboured a grouse that theirs was the only region in the entire Himalayan belt which had been denied the opportunity to govern itself in a manner suited to its peculiar topography.

It is after a gap of about 25 years that a new state has been carved out of an existing state, the last being Meghalaya, created out of the Jaintia, Garo and the Khasi hills of the then Assam state in the mid-'70s. All other states created thereafter already existed as Union Territories, their creation was only by way of elevation to full-fledged statehood.

It is important to note that unlike the other states created alongside Uttarakhand – Chattisgarh and Jharkhand – this hill state is not based on

any 'ethnic' consideration such as the predominance of tribal population pitted against the 'settlers'. Nor is it a linguistic state like those created in the 1950s and the 1960s. Linguistic-cultural identity has certainly lost ground to the existential needs of development, and Uttarakhand is a good example of that.

While development, or the lack of it, always lay behind most demands for separate states, the linguistic factor had actually camouflaged this factor in the initial decades of the Republic. The demands for Vidarbha, Telangana, Marathwada and Saurashtra have equally undermined the linguistic principle by elevating the issue of development over and above the lingo-cultural identity.

Identity formation in Indian politics, as perhaps elsewhere, has largely been a matter of creating instruments for mobilisation. Identity, in this sense, has always been an instru-

mental category tracing its origin to the politics of development. Ultimately, all questions of social existence are political and, therefore, demand their resolution in the public realm which politics tends to monopolise in a democratic polity.

The elements that make the construction of these identities possible are not static and change according to socio-economic situations. While in the '50s and the '60s the perceived unilingual distribution of economic resources in the multilingual states created a facade of cultural homogeneity, in the '90s the issue of 'development of under-development' and 'peripheralisation of the periphery' came to the foreground.

The less developed regions of the larger linguistic states that aspired to gain from a greater proximity between the politico-administrative setup and their cultural community soon realised that issues of hard economics overshadow the emotional dimension of lingo-cultural identity. The latter, in fact, was reduced to a category which was only instrumental in facilitating better bargaining by enlarging the numerical strength of the group, so important in an electoral democracy.

In 'non-linguistic' states like U P, Bihar and M P, this became easier as there was no correspondence between cultural identity and the political boundaries of these states. Large territories and unevenness of centuries of economic (under)development, coupled with the heterogeneity of dialect-related cultural identities, made these sub-regions more amenable to the idea of politicisation of the feelings of deprivation.

The centripetal political culture of the Hindi states however, stood as a rock against the forces of regional assertion. It is for this reason that while better developed states like Punjab,

Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and even Haryana, could clamour for a better deal from the Centre, the socio-economically backward states (pejoratively termed as BIMARU) could not muster sufficient political will to force the Centre or its politicians to lend a sympathetic ear to their problem of development of under-development.

The lack of a regional identity in fact made it near impossible for any leader from these states to galvanise the people's support on the issue of economic development. Consequently, either 'general' issues like the Ram temple dominated politics (in U P), or 'localised' caste identities captured the imagination of the populace.

It is this trap which made the 'mainstream' politics of the Hindi region responsible for the 'peripheralisation' of the 'heartland' in the last five decades of post colonial 'development', almost bypassing the 'cradle of Indian civilisation'. The developments in Uttarakhand, however, mark a break by making it possible to rally people around issues of existential realities that the hill dwellers had faced for years. Even though the other two regions of Chattisgarh and Jharkhand are also part of the centripetal Hindi belt, they constitute islands of distinct tribal cultures which are somewhat autonomous of the 'dominant' culture of the Hindi political elite, hegemonised for decades by upper caste leaders of the Congress-BJP culture.

Ironically, while caste politics for a time undermined the possible emergence of regional identities in the Hindi belt, it was the politicisation of these caste identities in the post-Mandal era that eventually paved the way for the emergence of sub-regional sentiments by highlighting the political interests of social groups dominant in certain districts of the larger states.

This, though not overtly done in the name of the region, had implications that went beyond caste identities. It was an extension of the 27% reservation quota for OBCs to the Uttarakhand region in U P that sparked off the agitation for a separate state in mid-1994 and strengthened the regional identity of the hill people.

Even though caste was not an issue in the construction of a regional identity in Uttarakhand, the near absence of OBCs in the hills where the upper castes are overwhelmingly present, inadvertently became an instrument of regional mobilisation. This was reinforced by the violence perpetrated on the Uttarakhandi activists in October 1994 by the U P Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav, who was seen as symbolic of the rise of OBCs in the U P plains. The reaction against the U P government's violent (and malicious) handling of the agitation for a hill state was transformed into a regional assertion, drawing on the 'neglect' and 'humiliation' at the hands of a government that did not care for them.

The demands for the creation of a Harit Pradesh (West U P) by Ajit Singh, and now for a Purvanchal (East U P) by some political leaders, has gained strength largely on account of uneven development in the wake of the green revolution which has unevenly benefited the two regions. Here again, the more prosperous Jats in the western districts have traditionally been supporters of a separate state, equally the Yadavs and some other OBCs in the central and eastern districts may lend support to the demand for a Purvanchal state. In a way it is natural for the locally dominant castes to become votaries of political autonomy since they constitute that influential core of regional politics which aspires to gain, both

economically and politically, from any reorganisation granting political autonomy to these regions

If the Hindi heartland was strongly centripetal in its political culture, the Uttarakhand hills were even more so. This made the construction of a regional identity that much more difficult despite topography being a favourable factor. The overwhelming representation of the region in the armed forces and location of Hindu sacred places (*chaturdhams*) in these hills, have kept the region firmly integrated into the 'mainstream' political culture which sees itself, even if erroneously, as the centre of Indian nationalism. It was decades of socio-economic neglect, coupled with administrative anomalies arising out of the distance from the state capital located in the plains of Lucknow, that over the years made it possible for regional sentiments to emerge.

Even this might not have constituted a sufficient condition to construct a strong regional identity, had the mid-1994 mistakes of perpetrating violence on the Uttarakhandi agitators not been committed by the U P government. The tactless and insensitive handling of the problem deepened the feeling of alienation and eventually helped the movement gain momentum. Key issues in the hills have always been existential, and not ideological. The Coolie Ugar movement (Kumaon) and the peasant rebellions, *dhandaks* (Garhwal) in the colonial period, and the anti-liquor, forest and the *Chipko* movements in the post-colonial phase, followed a trajectory set by the existential realities of everyday hill life which brought people, literally and metaphorically, close to nature and its many manifestations.

The reconciliation between the divergent and apparently contradic-

tory sentiments of regionalism and centripetal nationalism was greatly facilitated by an emergent BJP. The party's emphasis on 'nationalism', its strong opposition to the 'Mandalisation' of the polity, its anti-Mulayam postures in U P politics, and its emergence at the national level as a party trying to occupy the political space created by the rapid and continuous withdrawal of the Congress – all helped the process of a gradual appropriation of the movement by the BJP.

The only regional hill party, the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD), which initially spearheaded the movement, soon found no takers, and its candidates were humiliated at the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha polls held in the 1990s. The UKD's lack of organisational ability, absence of grassroots workers and, above all, its 'regional' overtones in an area proud of its nationalism (read centripetalism), heavily weighed against the UKD, which was totally marginalised in the wake of the rising electoral gains of the BJP.

It is, however, important to remember that the BJP's sweeping electoral gains, more particularly in the Lok Sabha (1998) and Vidhan Sabha (1996) elections, in no way marked the appropriation of the movement by the party. From the beginning the movement was kept out of the reach of conventional political parties. It was only the compulsions of electoral democracy, where a party has finally to articulate the grievances of the people by transforming them into seats at the time of elections, that pushed the people into eventually voting for a political party which could formally pass a bill in the central and state legislatures to create a separate state.

The creation of Uttarakhand state has thrown up a real challenge, not merely for its leaders, but for those

emotionally charged and mobilised people who had led the apparently leaderless, spontaneous movement in the mid-1990s. The non-involvement of professional political leaders had, at the time, kept the movement out of the mechanics of electoral politics. This helped it establish credibility in the national media which otherwise ascribes everything to the politicians, who in its opinion, keep motivating (read dividing) people to make political capital by harping on newer and newer vote banks.

While this credibility was a factor that eventually smoothened the process of the state's creation, it generated a political vacuum in the state. The actual 'leaders' of the leaderless movement were not conventional politicians, and those who were to ultimately pass the bill for a separate state as also to subsequently form the government in the state were not perceived by the people as legitimate leaders of the movement.

The real dilemma is created by a paradoxical situation where politics abhors a vacuum but at the same time people see the politicians as distanced from the genuine concerns of their existential problems. In an electoral democracy there is no real escape from this situation as someone needs to be voted to power to form and run the government. No wonder, at the time of the Lok Sabha elections in May 1996, the call for boycott by the Uttarakhand Samyukta Sangharsha Samiti evoked little response. People realised the futility of such a boycott when the actual process of the creation of the state was to be initiated, carried through and completed by the political elite, the spontaneous grassroots nature of the movement notwithstanding. This created a peculiar situation with the people expressing cynicism at the sight of political quarrels and

differences over issues like those of selecting/locating the capital for the state, a *pahari/non-pahari* chief minister, drawing of district boundaries, and the inclusion/exclusion of some districts in Uttarakhand state

Needless to say, it would be sheer fantasy to imagine a situation where people's grievances are articulated, expressed and transformed into political decisions without the agency of politicians who actually garner support through the nitty-gritty of electoral politics. To exert pressure on political leaders from below is understandable and desirable, but to conceive of a blueprint which leaves them no place amounts to making them puppets in the hands of those workers who owe no accountability to the people

Such tendencies have resulted in a kind of dictatorship, if not fascism. Politics is not merely about administration or governance, but touches upon many other concerns of the people for which periodic accountability is ensured through elections. This, however, is not to paint a bleak or black or blank scenario. In fact, the 'non party political politicians', as these grassroots workers and mobilisers are characterised, can definitely compel conventional full-time politicians to correct their priorities. This they must do, both by forcing the leaders to reset their agenda and, more importantly, by politically educating the people to understand their own priorities.

Often what are seen as the dirty tricks of politicians, are nothing but a reflection of the priorities set by the masses themselves. If divisions such as Garhwali-Kumaoni, upper caste-lower caste, tribal-non tribal, and indigenous-settlers, do exist today in Uttarakhand, surely these are not merely a result of political manoeuv-

ring. It is not only futile but unfair to expect politicians to bridge these gaps. This must be done by grassroots 'non political' workers who usually look down upon conventional political leaders. But to keep the latter out, or be cynical about them, would eventually end up creating greater cynicism about politics qua politics, which is dangerous for any democratic society.

It would be equally self-defeating if the 'people' were expected to 'rise' above local and sub-regional considerations by not raising such issues in the future. These include criteria for delimitation of district and Vidhan Sabha boundaries, the *pahari* identity of the chief minister, reservations for various categories of people, the location of a future capital, and sub-regional neglect. There are various communities in Uttarakhand which live on the periphery of the periphery in terms of development indices. These are both sub-regional as well as ethnic. The Jaunsaris, Bhotias, Buksas, Tharus, Rajis (Van Rawats), Gujars, besides the Shilpkars and other backward communities, are not only not at par with the caste (*savarna*) Hindus but differ among themselves in terms of the distance they have travelled on the socio-economic scale. The Bhotias and Rajis constitute the two extremes of the spectrum. Similarly, even in terms of numerical strength, which makes all the difference in the bargaining power of a community in a democratic set up, the Jaunsaris and Rajis find themselves at the two extremes.

Besides these socio-economic categories, there are various sub-regions within Uttarakhand which have distinct identities of their own. These were, however, fused together in the last decade or so to create a common Uttarakhandi identity in the wake

of the movement for a separate state. The Garhwal, Kumaon, Jaunsar-Bawar, Terai and the Doon valley constitute such sub-regions, besides the areas which are either too far-flung (high altitude) or too close to the plains of U P (like Hardwar, Kotdwar or Kalagarh) to identify with the dominant political and economic interests of the mainland Uttarakhandis.

While the solidarity expressed by such smaller identities during the active phase of the movement was admirable, there is no guarantee that it would continue to characterise the politics of the new state in the future. Nor should this be expected. In a way, expectations of the 'enlightened' sections of the population against raising sub-regional or sub-identity issues, which apparently 'divide' a society, are somewhat misplaced. It is the raising of such issues by smaller and still smaller communities (or regions) that makes democratic politics trickle down to the lowest levels. Acynicism often marks the creation of any new state in the wake of raising issues that are not seen as legitimate by its intellectual elite or the media. This is reflective of the distance that an elite travels from the grassroots realities during the course of mobilisation, forgetting that its own existential problems were once seen as 'divisive', 'illegitimate' and 'primordial' by mega elites of the parent region against whom they had originally mobilised.

The raising of smaller and divisive issues should not make us cynical about the future trajectory of political developments in the state. What is more important is to constantly maintain pressure on all political bodies to follow a development oriented agenda. What this means is that even if development related issues are raised in a partisan manner around

social and regional cleavages, this need not necessarily be seen as antithetical to the overall interests of the state. In fact, a smooth and abstract development oriented agenda is simply inconceivable in an economically under-developed society characterised by a politics of scarcity. Such comparisons are often drawn with the countries of the developed West. This is largely responsible for an overdose of cynicism among the intelligentsia.

One way to keep a constant vigil on priorities of political leaders would be by generating, reinforcing and maintaining some kind of 'regional-patriotism' among the people of the new state. While this may itself sound 'divisive' and parochial, what is being suggested is not regional chauvinism but regional pride capable of enthusing a new spirit and energy among the people to outgrow the image of non-development acquired over centuries. It is necessary to break the trap of cynicism, self-denigration and pessimism to come out of a cycle of non-development which has made people look down upon themselves and their region as incapable of redemption. Most other states in the country have shown zeal and pride in their history, culture, capability and human resources, which made them move faster on the development path.

Development is not merely about the hard facts of economics as defined by dispassionate economists, but relates to the political will of the people who alone set priorities, this often compels a government to take decisions that may not sound economically tenable or wise to hard-core economists. This is what development is all about in a democratic polity. It becomes possible only when the self-confidence of people is reinforced through constantly reminding them

that they are capable of taking inspiration from their history to not just catch up, but even forge ahead of other states of the Union.

This feeling is essential if we are to rejuvenate the politics and culture of the entire Hindi belt (particularly U P) where self-denigration is a favourite pastime, and most people seem to derive masochistic pleasure out of it, unimaginable in most other states of India. More than blunting the growth of regional pride it has made most people internalise their characterisation by others as spiritless, indolent and backward. To acquiesce in this state of political culture and psyche has so far been the plight of the region, hopefully regional patriotism in the new state will mark a break with this retrogressive political tradition.

Forging a sense of regional patriotism will not only help evolve a development oriented agenda by overthrowing the complex of guilt acquired over the years, but also contain many of the local sub-regional and social cleavages within manageable limits. Such a process of constructing a regional identity does to a region precisely what nationalism is capable of doing to a nation. Of course, the construction of a regional identity is as much an 'imagining' as is the idea of a nation, but it is just that much more functional as well.

The political capital generated and acquired during the movement for a separate state of Uttarakhand also produced such an identity as a by-product. It would be worthwhile if the gains of the movement were invested for future profit. The spontaneous nature of the Uttarakhand movement has heightened people's expectations, any leadership is likely to find the task challenging.

Marginalisation of Punjab

SURINDER S JODHKA

PUNJAB has been an unusually fluid region, not just geographically but socially and culturally. The boundaries of present day Indian Punjab for example, the region that this paper focuses on, have been redrawn several times over the last few centuries, currently occupying less than 15% of the total geographical area of pre-partition colonial Punjab. A large number of Punjabis, both Sikhs as well as Hindus, live outside the state. A good number of those who migrated from across the border to the Indian side at the time of Partition were resettled in Delhi and other towns of North India.

Over the years, a large number of Punjabis have also migrated out of India, particularly to the countries of the West. Punjabis are among the most influential diasporic communities in some countries like the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America. For example, the proportion of Sikhs in Canada today is approximately the same as in India, constituting nearly two per cent of the total population of the country.

Socially and culturally too Punjab has seen many changes in its pro-

file. Though in popular imagination Indian Punjab is identified with the Sikhs, it was only after its reorganisation in 1966 that Sikhism became a majority religion in the state. In colonial Punjab, Sikhs were a minority and constituted only around 12% of the total population. The Muslims with a population of around 51% formed the majority and the Hindus were around 36%.

Commitment to the 'native language' too has not been a passion among the Punjabis. It was not only a section of the Hindus of Punjab who chose to report themselves as speakers of Hindi during the post-independence period, the Muslim Punjabis of Western Punjab (the part that went to Pakistan) too hesitate to identify themselves with their 'mother tongue'.¹ The Punjabi elite of Pakistan, like their counterpart Hindu Punjabis of the Indian Punjab, prefer to identify them-

¹ Though this point is frequently made in the writings on Punjab, by 1981 a majority of the Punjabi Hindus had once again started reporting themselves as Punjabi speakers. The proportion of Punjabi speakers as per the 1981 Census was 84.9% (cf. Krishan 1998).

selves with Urdu, the national language of their country

However, despite this fluid and fragmented nature of Punjabi identity, the region has enjoyed a somewhat prominent position in the subcontinent. In the Indian national anthem, of all the provinces mentioned, Punjab's name comes first. The people of Punjab were also at the forefront of the nationalist freedom struggle. Local leaders, particularly the Sikh Akalis, have often demanded that the Punjab needed to be accorded special treatment because no other region had sacrificed as much for the freedom of the country as had the people of Punjab with martyrs like Bhagat Singh, Udham Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai and massacres like the Jalianwala Bagh. Most importantly, Punjab and Bengal were the only provinces to be partitioned at the time of Independence with millions of Sikhs and Hindus having to cross the newly drawn international border leaving behind virtually all their possessions.

Punjab continued to occupy a distinctive position in the Indian Union during the post-independence period. Being a border state, it was a critical region for independent India. Ever since the British declared Punjab a region of martial communities, the proportion of Sikhs in the national defence forces was much higher than their relative numbers in the Indian population. In popular imagination the Sikhs continue to be viewed as brave soldiers. As mentioned above, the Punjabis are also known to be among the most mobile communities of the subcontinent. They were among the first to go abroad to make their fortunes.

More importantly, however, Punjab, post-independence, acquired prominence for its dynamic and progressive economy, particularly its agriculture. The green revolution,

though experienced in other parts of India, was primarily identified with Punjab. At a time when India experienced serious shortages of foodgrains, the success of the green revolution nearly solved the vexing food problem of the entire country.

Though occupying merely 1.6% of the total land area of the country, Punjab produced nearly a quarter of the total foodgrain of the country and contributed to approximately two-third of the entire central pool of foodgrains. In 1980-81, for example, Punjab's contribution to the central pool of wheat was 73% and of rice 45%. As an offshoot of its success in the agricultural sector, Punjab emerged as the most prosperous state of the country with the highest per capita income. The state had the distinction of having one of the lowest proportions of population living below the poverty line.² Punjab, indeed, was a success story, a model to be emulated by other states.¹

The decade of 1980s was a critical period in contemporary Indian history. It was not only Punjab that witnessed a powerful ethnic movement, other parts of the subcontinent too saw the rise of a variety of 'new social movements'. The questions of gender, human rights, environment and ecology became politically significant during the decade. It was during the 1980s that autonomous dalit movements too came to acquire visibility.

The 'new' mobilizations by women, farmers, dalits, tribals and ethnicities not only raised different kinds of demands but questioned the policies and programmes of state-directed development that were being pursued with much enthusiasm in the

2 According to the Planning Commission estimates only 11.77% of the state population lived in a state of absolute poverty in the year 1993-94. The corresponding figure for the country as a whole was 35.97% (Ahluwalia 2000: 1640).

name of welfare and progress. Coupled with other changes at the global and national levels, the decade of the '80s saw an overall erosion of the 'Nehruvian agenda'. As Das puts it: 'The goals of rational organization of life, the scientific management of society, modernization and development, to which great energies had been devoted in the sixties and early seventies, now seem like signposts to cities that are abandoned and empty' (Das 1994: 1).

While the 1980s were, in a sense, a creative period for Indian society with many fundamental assumptions around which the post-colonial Indian nation was built being questioned, for the Punjab and for the Sikhs it was a traumatic phase. Fifteen long years of militancy and the manner in which the Indian state handled the 'Punjab crisis' not only caused bloodshed and suffering, it fundamentally altered the popular image of the region (Jodhka 1997). From a region known for its economic vibrancy and progress, Punjab came to be seen as a 'crisis ridden state', a region with serious problems of law and order and political unrest and therefore unsuitable for safe investments.

Nevertheless, despite myriad problems, even during the 1980s, the agrarian economy of Punjab continued to progress. The income of the primary sector of the state economy grew at an average of 5% per annum while the corresponding figure for India as a whole was around 3%.³ The real implications of the crisis were to be felt in the following decade when a new economic philosophy was adopted.

Though, in comparative terms, it continues to be prosperous, in the

3 During the 1980s income of the secondary sector of the Punjab economy grew at the rate of 7% per annum as against the all India average of 6.1% (Gill and Ghuman 2000: 450).

post-liberalization era Punjab is no longer counted among 'the happening states' of India. It is not just that Punjab is not a favoured destination for foreign capital or a centre of the 'new economy' currently, it did not receive much investment from the central government for its industrial development during the days of 'mixed economy' either. During 1970-71 to 1983-84 Punjab received only 0.92% of investments in the central government's non-departmental undertakings and the per capita investment in central non-departmental undertakings for Punjab (until 1985) was only Rs 414 (as against Rs 1508 for Maharashtra).⁴ Similarly, the state was not favoured by the big industrial houses of the country. On the contrary, having accumulated sufficient surplus, the local industrialists opted to go out of the state, particularly during the 1980s.⁵

Punjab, thus, remains a predominantly agrarian economy. Though in terms of the productivity of land, the agrarian sector of the economy continues to do well, in the changed context, there is little appreciation of the farmers' capability to produce more food. A bumper crop of paddy or wheat in Punjab is today seen more as a bane than a boon for the national economy. This, even as a large proportion of the Indian population continues to live below the poverty line.

The logic of liberalisation and globalisation demands the withdrawal of the state from the economic sphere and allow the market to take over. While it might be beneficial for indus-

try to freely import the latest technology or function in a competitive atmosphere, leaving the agricultural sector to the vagaries of free market could prove disastrous. Most of the land in India is cultivated by small landholders who are often forced to borrow from various sources for investments in the cultivation of cash crops.

The cycle of agricultural production is such that virtually the entire farm yield comes to the market simultaneously. In a completely free and open market, the indebted small cultivator would obviously find it hard to bargain with the economically more powerful trader.⁶ The farmers have so far survived because the Indian state offered them a minimum support price, particularly for foodgrains.

The recent experience of Punjabi farmers with the paddy crop is perhaps symptomatic of how Punjab's agriculture has become 'a burden' for food procurement agencies. This despite the fact that the political party in power in the state claims to represent agrarian interests. Although in the previous years too the farmers had found it difficult to sell their crop of paddy and later wheat, and there were reports of

as a whole. According to the 1991 census the proportion of urban population in Punjab was 29.6% as against the national average of 26.1%. The share of secondary sector in the state economy has also been growing though at slower pace compared to many other states. However, much of the industry in Punjab is medium and small scale and of native origin. It does not offer attractive avenues for employment to the upwardly mobile rural youth. A large proportion of the labour employed in these industries is made up of migrants from other states.

6 There have been several reports on the growing indebtedness of the Punjab farmers, particularly of small and marginal farmers. Their sources for credit are invariably informal, generally the *ahluas* (commission agent) in the grain market which obviously makes their bargaining position weak. See Shergill 1998, Bose 2000.

distress selling, their plight was particularly pitiable during the current paddy season. It was only when Punjab's chief minister pleaded with the Indian prime minister to intervene and pressurised the central government to declare a special package for the Punjab farmer that paddy was picked up by central procurement agencies.

The paddy season this year saw a bumper crop, with no natural calamities like untimely rains to damage the produce. But when the crop was brought to the *mandis* (the marketing centres) the farmers were surprised to find that there were no buyers offering the minimum support price declared by the central government. The officials refused to buy, claiming that the paddy was of inferior quality. The FCI (Food Corporation of India) chief went to the extent of stating that as much as 80% of the paddy was spoilt – a claim that had no scientific basis and, as many farm scientists of the state argued, was simply not true. In fact, FCI officials rarely conducted any tests while rejecting a particular lot of paddy even though they were provided with the kits to carry out such tests.⁷

Interestingly, traders and rice millers were willing buyers but at a price much lower than the official support price, which would have hardly met the farmers' costs of production. However, in the given situation, many farmers sold their paddy in distress. The traders paid them Rs 400 to 450 per quintal for the 'super fine' variety of paddy as against the official support price of Rs 550 and Rs 350 to 400 per quintal for the 'common' variety of paddy as against the official support price of Rs 510.⁸ The traders sold the same paddy to the official

4 P Singh 1992, 64.

5 However, despite all these factors, Punjab could not be said to be an industrially backward state. The state enjoys a leading position in the manufacturing of sports goods, hosiery, surgical instruments and cycle parts in the entire country. The proportion of urban population in Punjab is also more than that of the country.

7 Hari Jaisingh, 2000.

8 Lalit Mohan *The Tribune* 10 October 2000.

agencies at the minimum support price a few weeks later

Most farmers, however, chose to wait it out in the mandis, in some cases for over two weeks. The local newspapers during October 2000 were splashed with pictures of farmers sleeping over paddy piled up in the mandis. The grain was everywhere and the mandis overflowed with paddy. It was downloaded wherever the farmers could find room – on roads, in school grounds, in public parks.⁹ The farmers were perhaps more depressed than angry.¹ As a newspaper report states: 'Though the farmer's anger is coming to a boil, his attitude towards the government officials is, surprisingly, the very reverse. With folded hands, he pleads with them to lift his produce, at times virtually falling at their feet to grant him a "remunerative" rate. A telling symbol of the vicelike grip that the market binds him in.'¹⁰

Farmers were at the mercy of officials! 'It is blood and toil for six months and we cannot afford to annoy the officials. The money we earn during these days will provide for our family during the next six months as well as help us purchase fertilisers for the forthcoming wheat crop,' a farmer in the Khanna mandi, Asia's biggest grain market, told Bajinder Pal Singh, a reporter. However, not all of them could wait or bear the humiliation. There were several front page reports in local newspapers of small and marginal farmers taking the extreme step of committing suicide out of frustration and humiliation.

Its long-term implications apart, the processes of globalisation and liberalisation have made agriculture

an unattractive proposition. Even in a state like Punjab where agriculture is not merely a vocation but an identity that its practitioners are proud of, it seems to be losing its charm. While the farmers of Punjab have maintained a steady growth in the productivity of traditional crops, there have been no significant investments to help the farmer diversify into other crops and economic activity. As a consequence, the once powerful farming community of the state appears to have become a vulnerable category.

The Punjab farmer, once celebrated by the nation for his hard work and skilful agriculture, and who had solved the colossal food crisis of the country, is now at the mercy of the bureaucracy. This change in the popular image of the Punjab farmer was well summed up by a newspaper reporter during the paddy crisis: 'Not so long ago they were the pride of India, the archetypal sardar farmer featuring as the central character in every government advertisement for the nation's progress and prosperity. Today they are a dispirited lot, done in, they believe, by the bungling of all officialdom: government, government agencies, anyone in authority.'¹¹

The farmers of Punjab do not see this as an isolated case of bureaucratic mismanagement or the occasional case of overproduction. They are realising that the pride that the vocation of agriculture offered them till recently is fast disappearing. As one of them reportedly commented to a newspaper reporter, 'The government gave the slogan of "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan" during the wars, when the whole nation was in crisis. Now they have insulted the farming community by exploiting us.'¹² Another statement by 'leading

farm experts and progressive farmers' of the Amritsar district criticised the FCI chief for his negative remarks on quality of the Punjab paddy. Such remarks, according to them, were 'an insult to the farmers of the state keeping in view their record and contribution to the national food sector during the past four decades.'¹³

The 'crises' that contemporary Punjab faces is not confined to agriculture alone. The decade of the 1980s had far reaching implications for the state's economy and society.

After 15 long years of turmoil, the militant movement came to end without achieving anything for the people of Punjab. While none of the outstanding issues concerning the state – the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab, the dispute over the river water distribution – were resolved, the losses suffered by Punjab during the 1980s were huge. During the days of the 'crisis', the entire resources of the state were mobilised to counter militancy and hardly any development projects were taken up. In fact, even after the decline of militancy, the state government had to maintain a massive police force that had been raised to counter the militancy.

Many of the loans taken by the state from the central government during the last two decades were not for any developmental work but for meeting the salaries of government employees. Once the Akalis, in alliance with the BJP, came to power in the state some of these loans were waived by the central government. Yet the regular expenditure on the payment of salaries only went up. It was partly for this reason that the financial crisis created by the Fifth Pay Commission was felt more in Punjab than in other states of the country.

9 Bajinder Pal Singh, *The Indian Express*, 5 October 2000.

10 Bajinder Pal Singh, *The Indian Express*, 6 October 2000.

11 Vikram Jit Singh, *The Indian Express*, 14 October 2000.

12 *The Tribune*, 15 October 2000.

13 *The Tribune*, 7 October 2000.

Evidently, the continuing financial crunch has a direct bearing on the developmental process, since even after the end of the militancy, the state government has little money to invest in developmental projects. As a result, the state is currently witnessing a serious collapse of public institutions. Perhaps the most serious has been the collapse of school education, a situation particularly depressing in village schools. The number of teachers employed is normally lower than those required. Even those employed do not take their work seriously. Rarely do rural schools have sufficient infrastructure in terms of rooms, labs and furniture required for proper functioning. Since the schools are run by the state government, local panchayats have little say in their functioning. While the better-off sections of the village can send their children to urban schools, a large majority of rural children have no choice but to access local schools.¹⁴

The economic development experienced during the green revolution brought villages closer to the cities – in terms of lifestyle and aspirations. Thus, the well-off sections of rural Punjab not only began to send their children to the towns, but many of them also acquired a middle class lifestyle (Jodhka 1999). However, with the growing crisis of agriculture and the near collapse of rural education, the gap between the village and city seems to be widening again for the less privileged and poor. In an informal conversation, two teachers of the Economics Department at the Punjabi University, Patiala, told me that they

had noticed a significant decline in the number of rural students in the university, particularly in their department, during the last couple of years.

The two main avenues of employment outside agriculture that were conventionally popular among the Punjab youth were the armed forces or migration to the West. However, the government withdrew the preferential treatment enjoyed by the Sikhs in recruitment to armed forces during the colonial period, thereby considerably shrinking employment avenues.

Migration to the West continues to be a passion among the rural Punjabi youth, particularly in the districts of the doaba (Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur and Kapurthala). Though most western countries have imposed restrictions on open migrations, the migratory flow continues apace. Apart from getting there in the name of family union, many use 'illegal' means to reach western shores. Though a large chunk of these are from the dominant caste of Jats, the number of 'lower' castes going abroad has increased (Mehta 1990). However, using illegal means involves spending huge sums of money, which is often swindled by disingenuous middlemen.

It may seem bizarre to talk about the marginalisation of Punjab at a time when Punjabi culture – music, Bhangra, food and Punjabi dress – has made inroads virtually across the entire country. Even in interior Kerala and Andhra Pradesh one sees young women in Punjabi dress and the young enjoying the music of Daler Mehndi. The Punjabi *dhabas* too have become an all-India phenomenon.

Punjab continues to rank among the top five states of India in terms of economic indicators such as per-capita income. Only Goa and Delhi rank higher. The state has an insignificant proportion of population living

below the poverty line. Over the last four years of Akali rule, Punjab and the Sikhs have surely recovered from the traumatic and violent experiences of the 1980s.

Nevertheless, Punjab today is not seen as a model state, primarily because of the weakness of its economy. With the green revolution petering out, the state has not experienced any vibrant industrial growth barring a few pockets. The annual economic growth rate of Punjab during the post-liberalization era has been one of the lowest in the country. As per available estimates, the annual growth rate of Punjab during the period 1991-92 to 1997-98 was only 2.80%. The corresponding figures for Gujarat (7.57%), Maharashtra (6.13%) and even West Bengal (5.04%) were much higher (Ahluwalia 2000: 1638).

With the spread of green revolution to other regions of the country, the rest of India no longer depends on foodgrains from Punjab as it did 20 years back. While stocks of foodgrains in Punjab have been piling up in the local godowns, the contribution of Punjab to the central pool has declined. The percentage share of Punjab to the central pool of rice came down from 45.3% in 1980-81 to 39.1% in 1998-99 and of wheat from 73% to 48.6% during the same period.¹⁵

Despite talk about diversification of Punjab agriculture and a change in the cropping pattern, there has virtually been no attempt at building infrastructure and a marketing network to facilitate this shift to more remunerative cash crops. Such an initiative should have come from the state. One can imagine that the market or multinational companies might at some stage be willing to take such an initiative, but as of now there seems

14 One can notice the mushrooming of private schools in some parts of the Punjab. Most of these are nursery schools, their distinction is that they teach in 'English', whatever that may mean. They obviously cannot provide an alternative to school education as such.

15 *Statistical Abstract*, Punjab 1999, p. 232.

to be no prospect of this happening. Apart from this economic stalemate, Punjab faces political crisis, particularly in the governance of Sikh religious institutions.

The Akali victory in the 1997 state Assembly elections appeared to be an important turning point for Punjab and the Sikhs. The Akalis not only aligned with the BJP, a Hindu communal party, but also took a moderate position on the question of Sikh identity. Instead of appealing to the communal sentiments of the Sikh *panth*, the Akalis projected themselves as representatives of all Punjabis. Even on the question of community politics, their approach has been non-partisan.

This was best reflected in the manner in which they conducted the tercentenary celebrations of the formation of the Khalsa in April 1999. A large number of Punjabis visited the town of Anandpur Sahib and the state government invited dignitaries from all parts of the world and belonging to all communities. The celebrations also received extensive and positive coverage in the regional and national media. Apart from restoring a sense of confidence among the Sikh masses in Punjab and outside, the tercentenary celebrations also made the question of identity less significant for the Sikh community (Jodhka 2000).

With the decline of identity politics, questions of governance and welfare have begun to be matter once again. However, on this count the Akalis have not been able to deliver.

Besides representing the Sikh community and the region, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) also represents certain specific class and caste interests. Most Akalis come from the land-owning, dominant sections of the farming caste of Jats. And it is from this constituency that they get most of their votes. Agrarian interests have

always remained their main preoccupation. Despite widespread criticism, SAD continues with the policy of providing free electricity to farmers. They may know their politics well, but what they do not seem to know is how to respond to the emerging realities of a fast changing world.

References

- Ahluwalia, M. S. 'Economic Performance of States in the Post-Reforms Period', *Economic and Political Weekly* 35(19), 6 May 2000, 1637-48.
- Bose, A. 'From Population to Pests in Punjab: American Boll Worm and Suicides in Cotton Belt', *Economic and Political Weekly* 35(38) 2000, 3375-77.
- Das, V. (ed.) *Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Gill, S. S. and R. S. Ghuman. 'Crisis of Punjab Economy: The Alternative Options and the Role of the Government', in R. S. Bawa and P. S. Raikhy (ed.), *Punjab Economy: Emerging Issues*. Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 2000, 437-58.
- Government of Punjab. *Statistical Abstract of Punjab 1999*. Chandigarh: Economic and Statistical Organisation, 1999.
- Jaisingh, H. 'Growing Frustration of the Kisan: Agriculture Needs Fresh Strategy', *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, 11 October 2000.
- Jodhka, S. S. 'Crisis of the 1980s and Changing Agenda of "Punjab Studies": A Survey of Some Recent Research (Review Article)', *Economic and Political Weekly* 32(6), 8 February 1997, 273-79.
- . 'Return of the Middle Class', *Seminar* (476), April 1999, 21-25.
- . 'Punjab: Decline of Identity Politics', *Economic and Political Weekly* 35(11), 11-17 March 2000, 880-82.
- Krishnan, G. 'Urbanization since Independence', in J. S. Grewal and Indu Banga (ed.), *Punjab in Prosperity and Violence*. Chandigarh: Institute of Punjab Studies, 1998, 177-86.
- Mehta, S. *Migration: A Spatial Perspective (A Case Study of Bist Doab-Punjab)*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1990.
- Singh, P. 'Punjab's Economic Development and the Current Crisis', *Seminar* (401), 1993, 60-5.
- Shergill, H. S. *Rural Credit and Indebtedness in Punjab*. Chandigarh: Institute of Development and Communication, 1998.

Two decades of left rule

RAJAT RAY

IT was in 1967 that the first United Front government assumed power in West Bengal. Immediately thereafter the management of the Calcutta Tramways Corporation (CTC), a company incorporated in London in the days of the British Raj, was taken over by the state government. The transport minister who initiated the move was a communist leader of repute – his name, Jyoti Basu. Subsequently, the CTC was nationalized. The move was hailed in left circles as one step forward in the right direction to build socialism.

Thirty-three years later Jyoti Basu, after serving a record 23 years as chief minister, retired from the government of West Bengal. Before hanging up his gloves, he took a bold decision: in his last cabinet meeting the proposal to hand over the management of the state-run Great Eastern Hotel to a French hotel chain, the Accor Asia Pacific, was approved. From 1967 to 2000, the left has come a long way. But, all through its journey, the left in Bengal has been troubled by the contradictions it was confronted with.

The basic germ of the contradictions lies in their ideology which teaches them that nothing can be done for the poor unless the present system is changed, and to achieve that goal, they must capture political power. So when the electorate put them in power in the state, they found themselves in a position for which they were neither theoretically nor mentally prepared. Some left leaders, viz Jyoti Basu, rea-

lized that once in power there was an obligation to do something for the poor. But, the rest of his party did not share that realization.

The party steadfastly stuck to the age-old belief that unless they came to power at the Centre as well, it was not possible to do much. Moreover, their first tryst with power in independent India had made them suspicious about the working of the Indian variety of parliamentary democracy. The Centre, at the instance of the ruling Congress party, had sacked the democratically elected first communist government of EMS Namboodiripad in Kerala. In West Bengal, the initial experience of the left in the late '60s was more or less the same. So, when they returned to power in 1977, their reactions were reflective of past experience. Understandably, their initial approach towards governance was tentative.

In the early '80s, following Indira Gandhi's election victory, the left was engaged in an incessant battle with the Congress for survival. They had sufficient ground for suspecting her motives due to a series of bitter experiences over the past 20 years. It was Indira, as President of the Indian National Congress, who in 1959 initiated moves that eventually led to the overthrow of the Namboodiripad government in Kerala. In West Bengal too, the Congress didn't hesitate to invoke Article 356 of the Constitution twice (in 1967 and 1969) to keep the United Front out of power.

In the fight for survival with the Centre, the left leaders of West Bengal had to plan for this contingency. Their priorities were set, not according to the need of the state but by the exigency of their political compulsions. Yet, during this early phase of their long unfinished innings in Bengal, they showed tremendous courage in taking up bold projects for social engineering aimed at changing the socio-political equations in the state. Both the 'Operation Barga' movement and the democratically elected three-tier panchayat system are important in this context.

The election results from 1952 to 1971 show that the left was well entrenched in the industrial towns and adjacent areas. The rural hinterland remained a stronghold of the Congress ensuring its victory, given the larger number of seats in the countryside. The general election of 1977, held in the aftermath of the Emergency, somewhat changed this scenario in favour of the left. No wonder, in an attempt to consolidate its position, the left looked to rural West Bengal.

Though the Zamindari system was abolished by an enactment in the state Assembly way back in 1957, the land holding pattern had undergone little change. A vast majority of the cultivators had little or no land in their possession. In an effort to penetrate and widen its support base in the rural areas, the CPM, after coming to power, initiated steps to correct the existing imbalance in land relations.

For this adopted a two-prong strategy. On the one hand, it stressed the empowerment of the landless and marginal farmers – 'Operation Barga'. Additionally, it tried to complete the unfinished task of distributing surplus land vested from the landlords. On the other, the Left Front government introduced a three-tier

panchayat system and in 1978 held its first election. The panchayat system was important for it was expected to give the people a participatory role in the process of rural development. We shall see later that the effort was not extended to its logical next step, rather it was abandoned halfway.

Not that the environment was propitious for rapid economic development when the left leaders found themselves in power. At the Centre, after the fall of the Janata government, the Indira Congress romped back to power in the mid-term elections of 1980. It did nothing to dispel the misgivings of the left in particular, and among the people of West Bengal in general. On the contrary, the Congress sent all kinds of wrong signals to the states ruled by non-Congress parties. That these apprehensions were not unfounded became evident when in 1984 the AICC General Secretary Rajiv Gandhi, with active encouragement from Indira Gandhi, then prime minister, prevailed upon the Governor of Andhra Pradesh to dismiss the NTR government. The left fought alongside the Telugu Desam and other opposition parties to undo the misdeeds of the Congress. The Centre had to yield ground and the issue of Centre-state divide was given recognition in the formation of a judicial commission headed by Justice R S Sarkaria.

While concentrating on Centre-state relations, the left attempted to initiate its vision of social engineering – first, in the agrarian sector and, second, in the area of education, culture and rural health. The CPM, being an ideology-driven party, was expected to give priority to controlling education and culture. They retained control of education, health, and the information and culture ministries. In rural health, they tried to adopt the Chinese model. Citing Mao's exam-

ple, the party secretary, Pramod Dasgupta, tried to initiate the bare-foot doctor model in the state. But, the project met with resistance and had to be abandoned. Then they tried to build a three-tier health service system for the rural areas. The doctors would be placed in the primary, subsidiary and the sub-divisional or district hospitals and the state-run medical college hospitals would act as referral hospitals.

Budgets were allocated and some sort of infrastructure was built up. But, the left government failed to post doctors in the rural area. Even after 23 years of left rule in West Bengal, basic services are not available in most rural hospitals for want of doctors. According to state government figures, of the 40,000 registered medical practitioners, 69% are located in urban areas though 73% of the population lives in rural areas.

The situation is similar in education. During the days of British rule, it was mainly the local zamindars and other philanthropists who expanded modern education in West Bengal. After Independence, these institutions suffered from poor management and insufficient funds. In most schools and colleges, teachers were poorly paid, that too irregularly. The state government took upon itself the financial burden of paying salaries to school and college teachers, thus freeing them from uncertainty and worry. The campus unrest that had started in the mid-60s and grew alarmingly during the Congress regime of the Emergency ended. Classes and examinations were held regularly, results were published on time. The middle class in the urban and semi-urban milieu was satisfied.

The CPM had appointed party supervisors to oversee the work progress in all the important ministries. The education ministry was

looked after by Anil Biswas, currently state secretary of the party. The mandate was clear. At all levels of educational administration, the CPM put in place its own people to ensure full control. The party started interfering in the day-to-day affairs of the academia. In the mid-80s, the vice-chancellor of Calcutta University resisted such interference, thereby earning the wrath of the party. The CPM thereafter took care to screen all candidates before appointing them to the different academic institutions. Thus, Ranjugopal Mukherjee (former registrar of CU), for example, was preferred to a leading physicist like Chanchal Mazumder as VC of North Bengal University. It became a practice to install yes-men in the key positions of academic bodies.

There are seven state universities, more than 200 colleges, a few thousand secondary and higher secondary schools and thousands of primary schools, one higher secondary board, one secondary board, one primary board as also one madrasa board. To keep a firm grip the CPM created six ministerial posts in the education department, keeping them all in-house. But, the responsibility of the ministers was limited to implementing the dictum of party bosses. As was to be expected, the job-starved middle class started showing allegiance to the party to get jobs. As a result the party grew in numbers. With the active encouragement of the party, teachers and education administrators thus recruited organized themselves into strong trade unions. The erring teachers were protected by their respective organizations.

With the enactment of new laws, educational institutions were 'democratized' to a point that the number game gradually became a key factor in administration. Thus, the quantity

factor was brought in to prevail upon quality. The standard of education at various levels in West Bengal started to decline. The decline of teaching in the state-sponsored vernacular schools led to a mushroom growth of English-medium schools. More and more urban and semi-urban people started to prefer this relatively expensive privately-run school system for their children, while the rural poor were left to the vagaries of the state. The dropout rate at the primary and high school level, mostly in rural Bengal, showed a rising curve compared to relatively backward states like Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. The students aspiring for better careers started to enrol in other states.

In the cultural world the CPM burnt its fingers at the very first attempt. It all started with a small incident. Usha Uthup, a pop singer, was branded as vulgar and reactionary, first by a minister, then by the party. The singer fought back and went to court, forcing the party to retreat. Buddhadev Bhattacharya (currently chief minister) was entrusted with the task of defining healthy and progressive culture. The ensuing debate put the party in such a corner that it hastily abandoned the entire project.

Yet, occasionally, it tried its hand to control the artists and intelligentsia. Under state patronage a few films were made, some plays staged, and sponsorship extended to various institutions and individuals. But the overall scenario of Bengali art and culture took a downward turn. Coincidentally, in the same period, Hindi movies from Mumbai captured and dominated the local market. With the rise in unemployment, a new phenomenon raised its head. The youth turned to religion, with Jai Santoshi Maa of Bollywood and Jai Baba Taraknath of Tollywood dominating. This trend of

religious festivity cut across class and caste lines, both in rural and urban areas. Obviously, the CPM had no alternative cultural agenda to offer to the unemployed youth.

The newspapers of the early '80s in West Bengal often carried the common refrain of the Left Front government and party that given the limited power provided by the Constitution for the states, they could not address the bulk of the problems of the people, especially that of unemployment. During this period, Chief Minister Jyoti Basu demanded greater investment in public enterprises from the Centre. Many letters to the prime minister asked for the implementation of Haldia Petrochemicals and Bakreshwar thermal power projects in the state sector.

Simultaneously, he looked to the western world for investments in the state. In his many forays to the western world, he took along a few successful entrepreneurs and CEOs of multinational companies to convince the would-be investors that the left was not hostile to foreign capital. Nevertheless, the state did not get the desired investment as it was not in a position to rein in militant trade unions.

A classic example of this was the Great Eastern Hotel. Once a premier institution of Calcutta, it fell into bad days, kept afloat only by regular monetary infusion from the state exchequer. The state government looked for an interested party to sell it off to. Accordingly in 1995-96 came Accor Asia Pacific. In consultation with the state government the package it offered to the employees is worth mentioning. None of the employees were to lose their job, they would be deployed in other state-run tourist hotels. But the trade unions blocked the move and the party sided with them. As a result the project was not implemented.

A similar story was repeated when the Centre tried to sell off the ailing steel plant (IISCO) in Burnpur. Committed to the dogma that strengthening the public sector was the only route to industrial development, the CPM actively canvassed for the nationalization of any industry which fell sick at the hand of private entrepreneurs. It was a common scene of that time in Delhi to find left MPs leading delegations to the prime minister or respective ministers demanding nationalization of jute or other sick industrial units.

A few stray efforts were made to turn the tide, that too at the instance of Jyoti Basu. He often said in public, 'Since we don't control the Centre, we cannot act in isolation.' Defending his attempt to invite multinationals, he remarked, 'We will have to plan within the existing capitalist system of our country.'

In the '90s, when the Indian economy started opening up, Basu took a bold decision. He passed a new industrial policy in the state assembly without consulting the party polit-bureau. The party, which was otherwise opposed to the new economic policy of the Centre, felt humiliated. This initial success made an optimistic Basu announce many industrial and other projects involving big capital and multinationals, including a six-lane North-South corridor between Siliguri and Calcutta. The party hit back with a vengeance and put a brake on most projects.

In 1973-74, rural West Bengal was the poorest in the country, with 73% people in rural areas below the poverty line. A vast majority of people live in rural areas and depend on agricultural activity. Coupled with the land reform movement and Operation Barga, the West Bengal government simultaneously introduced food for

work programmes and programmes like IRDP and RLEGP, funded by the World Bank and implemented through the newly elected panchayats, creating substantial man days in the rural areas. The augmented job opportunity helped people to stay back in their villages even during lean seasons. The influx of hapless poor folk to nearby towns or cities declined perceptibly.

The Planning Commission later noted with satisfaction that substantial progress in removal of poverty had been achieved in the state between 1973-74 and 1993-94. Between 1983 and 1988, the decline in poverty was significant and it came down to 48.30%. Basu often cited this as a major achievement of his government.

But this success could not hide the grim reality of rural West Bengal. While highlighting the success in agricultural production as a direct result of the land reform movement, the left did little to augment the ageing irrigation system. And they had political reason for it. After assuming power in 1977, the party was opposed to giving priority to irrigation as, according to them, it would only strengthen the hands of rich peasants. Borrowing the vocabulary of the Stalin era, Pramod Dasgupta, then chairman of the Left Front and the all-powerful state secretary of the CPM, declared that he wouldn't allow kulakisation in rural Bengal.

Circumscribed by such dogmatic thinking, the CPM showed no interest in the irrigation sector, allowing a Front partner, the RSP, to run the show. Thus, a mega project like the Teesta Barrage, which if completed could change the economy of the otherwise poorly irrigated six districts of north Bengal, still languishes after 23 years of left rule. Recently, the state government claimed that the proportion of irrigated land had risen from

23% in 1977 to 56%. This speaks volumes about the kind of interest the left showed in irrigation. The Left Front government accorded top priority to Haldia petrochemicals. It should be mentioned that the issue of West Bengal's deprivation at the behest of the Centre, of which Haldia was an illustration, had helped the left win successive elections.

By 1998-99, a deceleration in removal of poverty became perceptible, as it hovered around 44%. According to the Planning Commission, a major reason for the stagnation in the poverty ratio was a deceleration in agricultural growth in the '90s. Agricultural production in the state increased by 5.39% during 1980-83 but by only 2.99% during 1992-95. In 1993, a two-member committee appointed by the state government submitted an alarming report. It argued that the land reform process was exhausted and that stagnation was likely in the agricultural sector. Nirmal K. Mukherjee, former Governor of Punjab, headed the committee, the other member was Debabrata Bandopadhyay, former land reform commissioner of West Bengal. Incidentally, Bandopadhyay had earlier played a crucial role in the Operation Barga movement.

In view of their experience of Bengal and Punjab, they cautioned the state government about continuing fragmentation of agricultural land in the name of land reform, creating apathy towards investment in land. They recommended a consolidation of land. Given their knowledge of ground reality they suggested that instead of issuing bureaucratic fiats, democratic institutions like the 3-tier panchayat should be engaged to create awareness among the masses and another movement be launched in the model of Operation Barga. As the cost

of high yielding seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and so on pushed up the cost of production, the banks too were of the opinion that any piece of land less than a bigha in size was unviable for the kind of credit required. Since a majority of land holdings were in the hand of small and middle peasants, they felt the pinch of the credit squeeze. Though the report was tabled in the state Assembly and accepted without discussion in the House, the government never tried to implement its recommendations.

On the other hand, though close to 50% of state plan expenditure was diverted for rural development projects through various ministries, the state government failed to create a mechanism for involving panchayats and the grassroot people in those developmental works, and, instead, ironically, depended on private contractors for implementation of those projects. The nexus between contractors and state government officials created hurdles for timely implementation of development projects. This unnecessarily increased the cost, forcing the cash-strapped government to abandon many projects. The CPM was not oblivious to these facts. Benoy Chowdhury, a veteran communist leader and member of Basu's cabinet openly criticized this contractor raj. There was no formal explanation as to why the party remained unperturbed and ignored his warning.

A possible reason may be that the CPM panicked. With the redistribution of land among the small and landless peasants and distribution of *pattas* to the bargadars, the party had created a stronghold in the rural areas. Now, within a span of two decades they could not ask peasants to change direction. Thus, pragmatism prevailed and the CPM turned its eyes from the growing problems of the rural sector

The initial success in the rural sector was enough to see the left through elections but a growing disenchantment of the urban people was evident in successive assembly elections. First the industrial areas, then Calcutta returned to the opposition Congress fold. In the rural areas, the voting percentage of the opposition, though growing, was yet to assume alarming proportions.

In the late '80s, however, the threat to the CPM came from an unexpected front, with the breakup of the Soviet Union. The initial reaction of CPM leaders was one of shock and disbelief. But, gradually they admitted that not all was well in the Promised Land. At one such meeting on the eve of the party congress, Jyoti Basu confessed that the party had failed to assess the impact of the tremendous technological advancement made by the western capitalist world. But the party stuck to the official line of dogmatic Marxism. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and a decline of the socialist world, the communists no longer held the high moral authority they once enjoyed.

In the early '90s, their ideological base in India came under tremendous attack from two sides: first, the rightwing BJP attacked their brand of secularism, second, Manmohan Singh initiated the process of economic liberalization. On both fronts, the left took a somewhat defensive position. While espousing the cause of minorities, the left failed to engage the Sangh Parivar on the ideological plane. The attempt to label the BJP as a communal force did not deter other centrist parties from joining hands with it in forming a government at the Centre and in different states.

In the economic sector the left was caught in a real dilemma. With gradual disinvestment of the public

sector and the closing down of sick public undertakings, it was obvious that the left would find a sympathetic audience in the working class. But they had no concrete remedy to offer. The age-old weapons of strike and agitation were rendered useless in solving problems of the closed and sick industries. Thus, when central public sector units like MAMC or Bharat Ophthalmic Glass were closed down in Durgapur, the left remained mute observers. Beyond criticizing the market economy, they were unable to organize the people against it.

The problem of unemployment also assumed a serious proportion with the number of registered unemployed rising to 55.85 lakh in November 1999. But this is only a partial picture, continuing illegal immigration has added to this problem. Way back in 1989, Union Home Minister Buta Singh had admitted in Parliament that the population growth rate in the 10 districts of West Bengal bordering Bangladesh was much higher than the national average. The long porous border and the economic crisis in the neighbouring country continue to attract a steady flow of people. But with the state's industrial scene not picking up, the old jute, textile, tea and engineering industries sick and burdened with high labour cost and outdated machinery, employment prospects remain bleak.

With the abolition of the license-permit raj in the '90s, the states, for the first time since Independence, got an opportunity to invite capital without bothering about clearance from the Centre. So, we find Jyoti Basu and his comrades willy-nilly moving in the direction. But since they lacked courage of conviction, their approach to inviting capital remained tentative. According to the state's figures, in the period between 1991 to Novem-

ber 1999, 338 projects with a total investment of Rs 8688 crore were actually finalised and another 72 projects with investment of Rs 10000 crore are being negotiated. Yet, when Warner Brothers showed interest in setting up a production studio in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, the Left Front government rejected the proposal stating ideological reasons. Many more would-be investors turned their back for want of required infrastructure (road, electricity, communication) and bureaucratic red-tape. Despite repeated assertions to the contrary, the state was unable to mobilize funds for the building of roads and other infrastructure.

In successive years the state had to cut back plan expenditure relating to important ministries for want of resources. Yet, it continued to pump in hundreds of crores to support 28 perennially loss making state public sector units, of which only five units have of late recorded a small operating profit. Even the much-lauded success in the power sector failed to create the expected environment for infrastructure upgradation, as the extent of transmission and distribution losses in the state electricity board remained very high. Obviously, no serious effort was made to improve the infrastructure of the state, despite hiring international consultants. As a result the state attracted little investment compared to other states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and even Orissa.

No doubt, some positive measures were taken in West Bengal in the last 23 years for the upliftment of the poor, among them the implementation of minimum wages in both industrial and agrarian sectors and protection of the rights of workers. But these benefits did not extend beyond the organized sector. While the state gov-

ernment employees, school and college teachers, municipal workers and, of course, workers in the organized sector benefited, a vast majority of workers in the construction industry, brickfields and in thousands of small industries remain deprived. In South Bengal, in districts like Midnapore and Hoogly, local party leaders with the help of panchayat functionaries used the distribution of pattas of vested lands as an effective weapon to mobilise landless peasants under the party fold. The party's discriminatory attitude alienated many poor people, this became evident during the recently held parliamentary by-elections in Panskura Midnapore, when thousands of landless and poor peasants openly revolted against the left parties.

The party's ineptitude, or rather incompetence, in matters of governance can be best illustrated by a small example. In Calcutta, with its growing population, traffic management has become a major problem, since available road-space in the city is limited. On any working day, at least 8 to 10 lakh people commute from Sealdah station to Dalhousie Square. The main thoroughfare, which connects Sealdah with Dalhousie, is Bowbazar Street, a 40 ft wide road. But, on this one-way avenue, a tram runs in both directions, regularly creating a bottleneck.

Be it in the area of development or industrialization, the failure to resolve the conflict between compulsions of development and left dogma, forced the communists to drag their feet on most issues. The work culture of the state government employees became a sore point, earning a bad reputation for the left. A frustrated Jyoti Basu commented in public, 'What can I do? I cannot ask the empty chairs (of the state secretariat) to

work.' The Left Front gradually lost its support base among the grassroots and more specifically, the subalterns. The newly appointed Chief Minister, Buddhadev Bhattacharya, admitted in a recent interview that the non-performance of the Left Front had pushed a lot of people towards the opposition.

Thus, when a determined Mamata Banerjee made a serious bid for political power in West Bengal, the deprived poor along with the unemployed youth became her support base. As the results of the last two general elections indicate, Mamata Banerjee has gathered enough strength in South Bengal, perhaps enough to win a majority of seats in Calcutta, Howrah, Midnapore, Hoogly, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas and Nadia districts. The Assembly election is scheduled to be held early next year. The opposition calculation is that in the event of the Left Front losing majority, Mamata could form the government with the help of the BJP and Congress. The voting pattern of the last Lok Sabha election makes clear that the combined votes polled in favour of the non-left parties exceeds that of the left.

The Trinamul and the state Congress leaders are exploring ways to avoid a fragmentation of opposition votes. Also, the Trinamul is trying to wean away the Muslim voters in Bengal. The minority votes in the state are substantial, about 27%, which can play a crucial role in tilting the balance if the trend is towards the opposition. In that eventuality, it is likely that at least initially, Mamata will emulate left populism. The tackling of the hawker issue by the Trinamul run Calcutta Municipal Corporation, as of the loss-making coal mines in Asansol belt is indication enough that she is determined to be more 'left' than the left.

Too many to care

MEERA CHATTERJEE

THE generation that was born after Midnight, in the dawn of the Republic, cut its professional teeth in the late '70s and early '80s to the jingle, 'Health for All by the Year 2000' Alas, those who are still around will be sporting replacements before India is delivered by this *mantra* The Year 2000 is over, but the goal of Health for All remains a distant dream, here as in much of the developing world For the country's health, the turn of the century is not a major landmark, nor even an inflexion point of any significance At a stretch, the year may represent a half-way mark between 1950, when India embarked on creating its health future, and 2050, when we can still dream it could achieve a decent standard of health for most of its citizens and reach 'population stabilization'

These two subjects—health and population—are intimately linked, not because one ministry of the government deals with both, nor because demographic indicators such as mortality and fertility are used as measures of health, but because the country will not be able to provide better health unless it simultaneously addresses 'the population problem', and vice versa, population growth will not abate unless health is improved dramatically

*The views expressed are personal and should not be ascribed to the authors' employer

If you despair at this 'Catch 22' situation, consider the further complication that both ill-health and population growth are at once significant consequences and causes of the grave poverty in India Neither will go away unless we address poverty, and we cannot reduce poverty without increasing health and reducing fertility But all is not hopeless This article attempts to help us steer through the morass that currently surrounds India's health Are we too many, too poor? Too poor to care? Too many to care?

India's health achievements since 1950 fill half a glass They include a doubling of life expectancy, a halving of mortality in the population at large as well as among infants, a highly susceptible group, and a reduction by two-fifths of fertility These are significant accomplishments We have also eliminated two important diseases smallpox and guinea worm, and significantly reduced others such as kala azar (leishmaniasis) and leprosy We have trained several hundreds of thousands of doctors and paramedics and built a public health system that is spread throughout the country The state and market have fostered a private health system that is five times bigger than the public system, for better and for worse

But there is half a glass yet to fill, and this is no buttercup, as the country's health needs remain enormous. India's population crossed one billion in 1999, nearly triple that of 1950. By 2050, it is expected to stabilize around 1.6 billion, a global first, as we will exceed the population of China around 2035. To stabilize largely connotes an equalization of births and deaths, necessarily at a low level since both longevity and birth control are aspirations of a modernizing society. A rate of about six deaths and six births per 1000 people would be acceptable. This means that the country's current death rate (8.7 per 1000) would have to be cut back by about a third, and the birth rate (27 per 1000) by over three-quarters. Thus, despite the gains in survival and health since Independence, India's mass of humanity – one-sixth of the world's total – will continue to struggle against decimation and multiplication through the next several decades.

Where India must focus to bring about stabilization is obvious from a few simple statistics. The dead today still include a significant proportion of the very young. Of around 8.7 million deaths that occur annually, over two-thirds are of children under five years of age, and almost one in four, about 1.9 million, are of infants (under one year old). Reducing these deaths by half would achieve the necessary reduction in the mortality rate and, would also accelerate the decline in the birth rate, as the states that have been through the demographic transition – Kerala, Goa and Tamil Nadu – have shown. Poor people want their children to survive, and poor families all over the country are demonstrating their desire to have fewer children who can aspire to a higher quality of life. To achieve these hopes they need ready access to basic health goods and

services, including an array of birth control methods.

A major cause of poor child survival is the pitiful state of health of Indian women. One-third of infants are born 'low birth weight' and hence at higher risk of death or physical underdevelopment because their mothers suffer from anemia, chronic malnourishment and/or infection. During their reproductive span (15-45 years), Indian women still die from pregnancy related causes at alarming rates, accounting for more than a quarter of the world's maternal deaths. Underlying both child and maternal deaths are malnutrition and rampant infectious diseases.

About 53% of Indian children under five are malnourished and over 60% of Indian women are anemic. Diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhoeas, respiratory illnesses, and other childhood infections are still widespread and affect the poor disproportionately. One person dies of TB and there are five new cases of malaria every minute in India. 'Economic giant' with half our population wasting away? Nothing short of a war against these diseases and hunger could set us on the path to superpower-hood. 'Here in Brahmpur, we have nothing but snotty noses, fields of flies, starving children, and old men with hacking cough. We have so little water that nobody thinks of cleaning or treating it, except in the rainy season, when the field ditches fill up and everyone suffers from malarial fever. The nurse may come once a month, and she brings a few pills and condoms, and tells the women to go for the operation. Yes, we need to limit our number of children, but young wives today are ignorant and subject themselves to the knives of local men instead.'

India is hundreds of thousands of Brahmpurs. Far from being deli-

vered from this 'hell for all', they are caught in the web of debates and dilemmas that continue to plague the health sector. At the dawn of this cyber-century, even the minimum essentials for health are unavailable to large numbers of rural and urban slum dwellers: little water, no sanitation, no vector control to deal with the swarming flies and mosquitoes, poor knowledge of hygiene, inadequate nutrition, little recourse to contraception, and unaffordable treatment – or worse, treatment in the hands of quacks and debtors. Listen to some more of Suraj Pal's concerns.

'Last week, Prakash Chand (a rich farmer) took his son to the hospital (the government Community Health Centre (CHC), about 40 kilometres away). It took them five to six hours by tractor and bus, and then they had to stay overnight to catch the return bus the next day. The teenage boy had been complaining of severe earache for about a week, and has now finished the medicines they bought for five days. To no avail. Even Prakash Chand cannot afford to go again – what to speak of any of us (poorer families) going at all! We could not even take our wives if they were dying.'

The health facilities that India has built with great fervour, and greater expenditure, over the past fifty years remain beyond the reach of the poor – indeed, beyond a sizeable proportion of rural residents, rich and poor. They have little access to health care beyond the occasional 'check up' or advice of the government ANM (Auxiliary Nurse Midwife) and the handful of 'carcin' found in a jar at the village petty-shop. Despite a large public and even larger private health sector, *appropriate* and *affordable* health care remains inaccessible to several hundreds of millions, particularly women and children. Large numbers

of villages are unconnected by road or public transport within a reasonable time-distance norm of a health facility or 'modern' doctor, public or private

Suraj Pal knew little about the CHC, but Prakash Chand was lucky that on the evening he journeyed to it there was a doctor in the house and a 'medical shop' open nearby to fill his son's prescription. In addition to his travel expenses, food and some rupees to the chowkidar to allow him to sleep overnight in the verandah of the health centre, he spent 67 rupees on a strip of 'new generation' antibiotics. But nobody told him what to do next. The doctor was too pressured, and the medical caste system does not permit anyone else to provide appropriate drug advice – not even the 'compounder', had he existed.

Curative care without follow-up instructions or health education is about as good as sowing seeds and neglecting to water them. Either without public health and preventive measures is tantamount to sowing or sprinkling unploughed ground. While the government spends its limited resources infrequently, the poor are consigned to repeated cycles of illness, exploitation and dwindling physical, financial and psychological strength. Most of the knowledge we need to address the major diseases that affect them and prevent this vicious downward spiral, and the technology, exist. What is still missing in the health services is the managerial competence to deliver services of effective quality in the appropriate balance, and the politico-bureaucratic will to allocate the resources that are required to do so.

While health services alone will not solve all the extant problems, a system seriously committed to *improving health* would work with the

food distribution efforts, notably the public distribution system and the integrated child development services (ICDS) to enhance nutrition, and with public health engineering departments to increase the health impacts of water and sanitation schemes. These four inputs – health care, food, water and sanitation, available together – are the minimum essential for recovering the country's health.

So what prevents the health system from getting on with its job? One paralyzing problem that has resurfaced amid the birth of DALYs (disability-adjusted life years) as a measure of health, the growth of liberalization and privatization theory, and the mushrooming of NRI financed health facilities is the 'equity versus efficiency' debate. Although we have neither equity nor efficiency at the current time, the question being asked is: Should India *really* provide health care for all or be concerned mainly with the efficiency of its health spending? Although three-quarters of health expenditure in the country is borne by households, and a further 10% by other private entities, this debate chiefly surrounds the public sector. Acceptance of the private sector's profit-making *raison d'être* appears to exempt it from responsibility for providing low cost or 'no cost' care to those who cannot pay, *as well as* from supplying cost-effective services to paying patients.

Many believe that market mechanisms will iron out inefficiencies and distortions in due course. Suffice it to say that illness and the fear of death produce atypical consumer behaviour in the health care market. In their anxiety patients are rarely able to shop around, demand their choice, or ensure value for money, necessary conditions for making the market work honourably. Numerous studies

have documented how households utilize, first local and low cost health care, but end up at expensive facilities when a patient is critical and the family in no state to bargain. We are too many, too poor *and too rich*, for health care to be anything other than a suppliers' lair in the foreseeable future. In this context, government health services in both rural and urban areas are far from being the 'provider of last resort', they are a crucial intermediary to which the sick flock in the hope of getting effective and reasonable treatment.

But 50 years on, the public sector does not exercise this role satisfactorily. While committees and commissions have repeatedly attempted to commit the government to some form of 'health for all' and write the prescriptions for its discharge, the exchequer has never provided the resources necessary to build a system capable of concertedly delivering even the most crucial preventive and curative services. Over the years, there has been little managerial commitment to rationalizing available infrastructure and staff, and utilizing new resources strategically to fill critical gaps and maximize effectiveness in key areas – neither substantive areas such as child health nor geographic areas such as those endemic for a disease, or remote ones.

Political compulsions have led to resources being spread much too thin to make a difference, and population growth has resulted – to repeat a favourite image – in the health sector 'running to stay in place'. The exception, of course, was the political compulsion of sterilization during the Emergency, which actually focused money and manpower on other men's power (for money). Alas, the health sector got carried away, the people ran away, and it took the country two full

decades – a generation – to overcome the *sharm* engendered by that effort

In effect, there is very little strategic analysis or decision-making in the health sector – a major lacuna when you need to fight a war. To begin with, the public health system must decide who and what it will treat, referring to the macro or policy level rather than the micro, health facility level. Plagued by a guilty conscience about the poor and the continuing high levels of disease on the one hand, but unable to relinquish claims to medical miracles on the other, health policy continues to support the ‘dual’ approach that has been followed to date: primary health care for rural areas and super-sophisticated urban medical facilities. Unfortunately, there have never been enough resources to go around, leaving both ends of the chain frazzled. The insufficiency of public health and preventive measures and basic health care for the population at large puts an unseemly burden on higher-level health facilities.

This situation calls for a complete rationalization of the health pyramid, beginning with rectification of the problems at the base, where paramedics and doctors (where they exist) struggle to treat hundreds of millions suffering from the most common diseases with severe shortages of drugs and equipment. Then, effective systems should be developed to ensure that the apex district and urban hospitals, whose specialist facilities are currently wrongly and over-utilized, are efficaciously used. It is essential to reduce the country’s large disease burden through public health measures and better primary care *for all* in order for secondary and tertiary facilities to provide the appropriate services to those who require more specialized levels of care. In short, efficiency in India’s health sector cannot be achieved

without equity considerations – and vice versa because of the continuing shortage of resources. Thus, the ‘either-or’ debate should simply be put to bed.

Such a rationalization of the health system would need two hard decisions to be taken soon by our policy-makers. First, overall resources to the health sector must be considerably increased and, second, these must be preferentially allocated to programmes and facilities that reach and address the most urgent health needs of the poor. India must not continue to pretend that it can produce health for all when the public sector spends less than one per cent of GDP on health. True that private spending increases this amount five times, to about 6% of GDP – but this was the percentage estimated in 1980 (by the ICSSR-ICMR Committee) as needed by the public sector alone to support the country’s health goals. We are really not too poor to care, we just do not care enough.

The Ninth Plan document, now some two years old, recognizes the gaps in health infrastructure and manpower, especially at the primary level, and the poor functioning of services and referrals. It also indicts hospitals for their lack of personnel, services and supplies. It talks of the escalating costs of health care, and the widening gap between what is possible and what is affordable by individuals and the nation. It recognizes that the availability and utilization of health services is poorest in the neediest areas of the country. And it points to people’s increasing awareness and expectations of health care, and to the increased potential for health interventions based on technological advances. To improve coverage and quality and ‘functional efficiency’, it commits the government to a Special Action Plan

to expand and improve health services to meet health needs, eschewing the target approach that earlier directed the sector.

But alas, the plan does not allocate the kind of resources to health that are necessary to correct these ills. Equally, it fails to enunciate clearly what its choices would be among the numerous interventions listed, or even how these priorities would be identified. Until the size of the health pie is increased manifold, it will be necessary to make such choices. Measures aimed at childhood infections, malaria and tuberculosis, and women’s health would have the greatest impact in reducing ill-health among the poor.

These choices are underpinned by considerations of equity and social justice, and so differ from those made by a strictly DALYs approach. This would target resources to maximize the benefits gained, regardless of who gains, and thus would help those who can benefit the most, and most easily, over those who have the greatest need. As we are, indeed, too many to care for, the public system should focus on those who can least afford the private sector.

One mechanism proposed in the Ninth Plan could be useful to provide more and better services all round: levying user fees at hospitals and specialized institutions. Currently, even our post-graduate institutes and super-speciality centres fail to break even in the provision of services. They are subsidized well beyond their medical education and research budgets, and their benefits accrue largely to the rich and powerful. To increase health resources, user fees could be introduced in most public hospitals, levied on all who can afford them, including government servants, politicians and the like, while the poor are charged

only nominal rates. The will to do this has to be substantially fortified, ensuring faithful application of means tests and appropriate distribution of revenues within and, where feasible, beyond the facilities raising them. These collections could cross-subsidize much needed services for the poor at both urban and rural centres and, concurrently, other public monies should be allocated to facilities that are unable to raise adequate resources for sound external reasons.

But creating health entails much more than increasing health spending and providing health services. There is a fundamental need in India to redress the unequal distribution of wealth that results in 35 to 40% of the population living below the poverty line. These almost 400 million people cannot afford the 'two square meals a day' that constitute basic nutrition, nor the clothing, shelter, environmental conditions, knowledge and care that are necessary to maintain health. Too many are, indeed, too poor.

They live in areas that are desperately short of water and food, far away from markets and service centres. They often lack the resources to send their children to school, which avenue might lead to socio-economic 'uplift' at least in the next generation. Women are disproportionately represented among them, just as they are among the ill and prematurely dying. That addressing poverty and income distribution is essential for the nation's health is borne out by studies that show that infant mortality rates (IMR) are related to income distribution within countries. India could reduce its IMR (71 per 1000 people) by half at its current per capita GNP level if it were to reduce inequality in income distribution (measured by the Gini coefficient) by 40%. If this were to occur in the context of a doubling of per

capita GNP, the IMR could be brought down to about 25 per 1000. We would then have won the war.

In addition to economic approaches to distributing wealth there are other aspects of our society that must be tackled to enhance well-being. Growing anomie is not good for anyone's health – and the creation of social capital will be increasingly important to restoring and securing health. In fact, increased social capital is one of the ways in which relative equity in income distribution enhances survival. Societies with lower income inequalities usually have lower social tensions and higher levels of trust, which affect health outcomes directly (e.g., through reduced violence) as well as indirectly (e.g., through greater trust of health service providers who are usually of a higher social class than the poor). An example of the need for greater trust is found in a common complaint: the poor in India have about the ANM who is responsible for providing them primary maternal and child care. They say she acts like a *memsahib*.

The idea that social capital is important for health is not new – it just keeps getting forgotten in the health sector's preoccupation with numbers, technology and money. The value of the state investing in social capital underlay the community development programmes of the early Republic. India's health planners have long been aware that family and community networks can be instrumental in maintaining or improving health, that health practices are imbedded in culture, and that other institutions, both formal and informal, affect health outcomes. Enhancing the social status of, say, women or tribal people, doing away with the stratifying caste system at least in service provision and preferably in the polity at large, expanding knowledge, and

reducing social tensions, all underlie the development of social capital that is necessary for health.

During the '70s and '80s discussion focused on the roles of formal voluntary organizations in the provision of health care. Recognition that 'Health for All' could not be achieved by government alone led policy to provide a role for NGOs in the interface between government and poor communities. However, government-NGO relationships have remained weak, and an adequate institutional base has failed to develop even for those aspects of primary health care that the government finds difficult to provide. In discussions of health care provision today, NGOs occupy third place after the state and the private for-profit sector.

Contemporary concerns with social capital include the levels of people's participation, social or civic trust, and groups or networks that cause cooperation or coordination for mutual benefit. Thus, from family and community mechanisms that have been a mainstay in health – recall the traditional knowledge and role of the grandmother in household health, the *dai*, and the community health worker – the focus today is on associations of poor people, especially women, and social movements, and how these can be instrumental in improving the health of members.

NGOs too have realized their limitations and increasingly work through community-based networks, or focus on campaigns and advocacy that reach larger numbers, leaving the development of social capital to those directly involved. Various forms of public communication, debate and discussion can also serve to influence health – from spreading health awareness, to pressuring government to allocate resources to the war

on disease in preference to other imagined wars

As state resources shrink, mechanisms of mutual aid and reciprocity, of collective efficiency and social 'safety nets' will become increasingly important in Indian society – among both rich and poor. It is worth considering where social capital might replace the state to achieve better health outcomes, and where state support could enhance the growth of such capital, investing now for the future. The development of social capital – from debates to networks – can improve the agency for survival, while the costs of isolation include illness and death.

In sum, India cannot lay legitimate moral claim to being a modern society unless it squarely addresses the primordial health problems it harbours and the underlying disadvantages that afflict 'the other half'. Economic and social development are both intimately related to health and survival. It has been obvious for some time, and will remain true, that any society wishing to develop economically must improve its health. Health and well-being will not increase by *growing* wealth alone but the *distribution* of this wealth, i.e., the reduction of economic inequality and the diminution of social disparities are important for their attainment. Better health also requires investment in health care and in the basic goods that underlie health, food, water and sanitation.

Better health services, improved access to them, a more equitable and harmonious ('caring and sharing') society – all call for attention to social capital. Health policy in India has been tragically inconsistent in acknowledging these fundamental understandings and underpinnings, and developing them. Policy-makers thus need to take a new, long and hard look at where we are, and where we are heading on the health front.

Children, work and education

VIMALA RAMACHANDRAN

SEVERAL months ago I visited an educational programme called Namma Bhoomi in Kundapur near Udipi (Karnataka). Over a hundred boys and girls in their teens were studying in a residential school, trying to upgrade their educational levels while learning skills for employment and self-employment. Young boys and girls were training to become horticulturists, carpenters, masons, electricians, plumbers, mechanics, weavers and so on. Children of different age groups were working, learning and playing together – running from one end of the campus to another.

On my first day in Namma Bhoomi, a group of seven teenagers rolled out an enormous piece of cloth (traditionally known as a 'phad') and narrated the story painted on it by different batches of children over several years. They talked about the work children do – at home, in the field, with their parents, uncles and so on.

They talked about 'Bhima Sangha' – a union of working children, a children's help line, children's panchayat and appointment of children's friends – adults whom the children can reach out to. All 'working children' up to the age of 18 are welcome as members. This organisation conducts elections, interfaces with the panchayat and tries to solve the problem of children – enabling them to be retained in school, prevent them from migrating to the cities and so on.

In the last five to six years, efforts to improve the quality of education in primary schools, planning for the future and citizenship education has energised the community. Children talk about the work they continue to do at home, before and after school. Education and work, many of them argue, are not self-contradictory – provided the work is non-exploitative. Empowerment of children through the Bhima Sangha and the children's panchayat (makala panchayat) has made a difference. Interestingly, we did not come across even a single child who had not completed primary education.

As the presentation drew to a close one of them said, 'We are children and we also work. Are we weeds to be eradicated?' For a moment I did not understand what he was trying to say and I asked him who was out to eradicate them. Though he did not respond directly, I suspect he was upset with those of us who advocated complete abolition of child labour.

He said many children work – before school, after school, in peak agricultural seasons and during holidays. Older children went fishing with their fathers at night. Yes, he admitted, there were children (mostly in the 14-18 age group) who did not go to school and worked many more hours. He also talked about young boys of 12 or 13 from Kundapur, who run away from home to work in hotels and restaurants across the country. That, he admitted was not in the best interest of the child.

A young girl told us about how they 'rescued' children from hotels and went on a fact-finding mission to Bangalore to enquire into a fire where hotel workers had died. Their friends then placed before me a list of work that children engage in – those seen as not harmful and those that were. They

read out stories written in their newsletter. Essentially, their message was for a more nuanced approach to the question of child labour and working children.

I must admit that I am considered a 'hard liner' on child labour, for I believe that all children have a right to basic education (not just primary education), which is a fundamental right. I was, therefore, pleasantly surprised when this group of young boys and girls wanted to talk about child labour and the responsibility of the community and the state.

I do not believe that every child who is out of school is by definition a child worker. Children drop out of school for many reasons – quality, relevance and dysfunctionality being important issues. There are those out-of-school children who just hang about, also children who are forced to quit school to work. We also know of situations where children mechanically go through five years of primary education and emerge barely literate – leading to community apathy towards schooling. Obviously the scenario is complex and does not lend itself to simple explanations.

Soon after my Kundapur trip, I went to the 'infamous' carpet belt of Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh. I met a large number of children who had been 'rescued' from work and were studying in an alternative school in a time-bound programme that builds bridges to the formal system. I questioned the children about work and education. Interestingly, most of the girls said that they continued to work – before and after school hours. They all worked on *zari/gota* work, cooked, cleaned and did what they were doing before enrolling in school. Most of them worked long hours after school. The boys talked about the work they did at home, the farm and

with their family members. Not surprisingly, the boys had more free time than the girls.

I asked them what happened after primary education? There was little information about those who graduated from these schools – some went on to government middle schools, some dropped out. The numbers, spread and quality of government middle schools, the children felt, left much to be desired. Overcrowding was common and many schools were dysfunctional. What bothered me was that while social mobilisation for 'eradication' of child labour was effective, the quality of education in many of the alternative schools/bridge programmes I visited across the region was not inspiring. All those who appear for the class V NFE examination are declared 'passed' and many of them find it difficult to cope with the formal system thereafter.

The older children, many of whom had completed class V or class VII, were anxious about their future and eager to acquire skills that would open avenues for employment or self-employment. Essentially, once they cross the magic barrier of age 14, or in some cases age 16 (class X), they are no longer classified as child workers and are on their own.

A social mobiliser in Mirzapur stated that while 'child labour' had become uncommon in their area, many traders had shifted their base to Bihar and other parts of Uttar Pradesh. He also admitted that children continued to work behind heavily guarded shutters – most of them in the 12+ age group. There was no child-to-child network that could reach out to such children.

Travelling across the country, documenting primary education programmes, I came across school-going children who worked and out-

of-school children who were not engaged in any full-time work. I also came across 'rescued' child workers who were not sure what would happen to them after primary education, tribal children who have really no school worth mentioning in their area, and urban children in night shelters and drop-in centres.

Are all children in schools free from 'labour'? Are all children out-of-school workers by definition? How do we come to grips with the heavy work burden of girls – before and after school? What about children labouring during peak agricultural seasons or artisan children who absent themselves during peak business season? Obviously there are no simple answers to such complex situations and problems.

In the last 15 years the politically correct position in development circles was to declare that 'all out-of-school children' were by definition child workers. Several organisations and projects I visited in the last eight months admitted that while this indeed was their public position, they could not afford to be rigid on the ground. Conversely, there were those who argued that given the social and economic reality, working children had to be empowered and their rights protected. Pushing the issue under the carpet helped no one, least of all the children who continued to work. They argued that mobilising and educating children about their rights, creating a help-line and keeping avenues of dialogue open were perhaps the only ways to ensure that children are not exploited.

Looking at the work on the ground, I was left with the feeling that this divide was not as irreconcilable as it seemed. Let us unpack two rural scenarios and analyse the impact on the ground.

Scenario One

¹ The starting point is that all out-of-school children must be brought into schools, thereby eradicating child labour.

* Emphasis on the responsibility of the state towards the fundamental right of every child to basic (not just primary) education.

* Simultaneously, mount a campaign against child labour – in the media, at the policy level, with the administration and the community. Declare products 'child-labour free', especially those meant for export.

* Identify and institute cases against people who employ children.

* Starting with contact centres in the village, organise bridge courses and enable children to get back into the formal system.

* Lobby with the government to admit children from bridge courses into middle and senior schools.

* Declare villages child-labour free and encourage the government and the community to take pride in this achievement – no visibility or recognition of work done by children (especially girls and those from small peasant families).

The accent is on social mobilisation and educational access, coupled with the duties and responsibilities of the government towards primary education. Teachers and social activists focus on enrolling every out-of-school child and leave the quality and achievement issue to the education system. They make efforts (at the policy and administrative level) to ensure children are admitted at higher levels, but where the ratio of primary to middle school and further to secondary schools is poor (for example, in Uttar Pradesh), there is little they can do after the primary stage. As their primary agenda is eradication of child labour, they do not have the organisa-

tional capability to take care of the educational needs of these 'rescued' children beyond a point.

Scenario Two

* Start by talking to and gaining the confidence of the children and the community.

* Map the range of work that children are engaged in, both school-going and out-of-school children.

¹ Mobilise and organise working children into a self-managed association/organisation. Educate them about their rights, enable them to map the work children do and encourage them to set their own priorities for action.

* Simultaneously, work with teachers and the educational administration to look into what is happening inside the school. What are children doing, what are they learning and why do some of them drop out. In short, the pull and push factors that affect children's access to and retention in schools.

* Children's union/association to educate the community, set up a help-line and interface with local administration and panchayat. Create awareness about the rights of children (based on the convention on the rights of the child), namely right to education, freedom from exploitation, hazardous and non-hazardous work, shelter, nutrition and emotional and physical well-being of children.

* Older children encouraged to talk about their future – training, employment and self-employment opportunities and link education with future prospects.

* Children help-line to reach out to working children in distress, confront (even register cases) and work with the government, panchayat and employers to ensure the rights of children.

* Interface with panchayat, schools and the administration to address barriers and constraints that prevent children's realisation of their rights, including education.

* Over a period, villages covered under the programme declare that their children go to school while acknowledging that their children do some amount of work at home

The focus is on empowering children with knowledge, confidence and a collective strength to set priorities for action and help each other. Children discuss and determine what work they can do and what kind of work is hazardous to their growth and development. The net result is withdrawal of children from full-time or hazardous work, while acknowledging the work they do at home, in the farm, in family occupations and in supporting the family during peak seasons. The quality, content and relevance of education are brought centre-stage in this approach. Social mobilisation and community awareness is achieved through the association of children.

What do the two approaches have in common? Children who participate in their programmes emerge as self-confident young men and women, carry themselves with great dignity and are not afraid to speak their mind. Both approaches focus on building the self-esteem of children. Theatre, music, games and a range of exposure visits and excursions give children a chance to experience the joys of childhood.

The endpoint, at least in organisations working with rural children, is the withdrawal of children from full-time work and enhanced access to education. Strategies and priorities are no doubt different and so is the starting point. While one approach gives primacy to the duty of the state to ensure that every child goes to school, the other lays emphasis on mobilising and empowering children under the child rights framework.

It is indeed unfortunate that the debate on children, work and educa-

tion has been trapped in definitional wrangles and pointless rhetoric. The fact is that not all out-of-school children are full-time workers and a large number of children who go to school do some work – within the house, in the farm, in family occupations. Girls not only go to school and do housework, they also put in several hours of work rolling papad, or beedis, doing embroidery, disentangling wool and yarn and so on.

Drawing artificial boundaries between work and education is not desirable – because a little bit of work in a non-exploitative environment and in the family is not detrimental to their growth and development. Children from artisan families pick up the skill as children and so do thousands of girls who learn to cook at a very early age. The issue is one of exploitative work situations and exploitation of children.

Universal access to primary education has little meaning in circumstances where social barriers prevent meaningful participation. I am reminded of a meeting in a Dalit hamlet in Gujarat with parents and children from the Valmiki community. When I asked why their children did not go to school even though there was a fully functional primary school in the village, they pointed to three boys and two girls. Apparently these children were formally enrolled and had even attended school for five years, but they could barely read. Regular taunting by other children, the attitude of the teacher and their social status erected insurmountable barriers for such children.

The average income in the Valmiki household was fairly high, with at least one or two family members in government or municipal employment. I then asked what they did the whole day. The boys generally

hung around the village or went out to the nearest town. The girls worked at home with their mothers. They wanted to go to school, to get out of the terrible cycle of caste discrimination, but the school was beyond their reach. Local private schools do not admit children of families engaged in manual scavenging, they do not want to offend their clientele.

So what options do such children have? Granted, the government must take responsibility and teachers who practice any form of discrimination should be booked under the atrocities act. Granted that progressive organisations must expose such practices and make sure every single child can participate in schooling with dignity. P. Sainath's series of articles from across the country confirm our worst suspicions – untouchability continues to be practiced in tea stalls, hotels, schools and health centres. Children from affected communities do not always have free access to education or even employment (other than their traditional caste employment).

How do we categorise such out-of-school children? What about the hundreds of children who drop out of school because they are not learning anything? How do we look at children who work morning and evening, and run to school in-between? How about seasonal absentees and children who help out with agricultural work? Where and how do we slot them?

There are obviously no easy answers to such complex questions. What we can do is to bridge the rhetorical divide between people and lobbies that are truly concerned about children, work and education. Peeling the layers of shrill rhetoric is the only way to get to the kernel, maybe then we can learn from each other in a search for solutions.

End of cricket as we knew it

RUDRANGSHU MUKHERJEE

Pah, pah Give me an ounce of civet, good
apothecary, to sweeten my imagination

King Lear

THE former Australian captain, Richie Benaud, has the good fortune of remembering his first view of a first class cricket match. My memory of my first visit to Eden Gardens is lost in the mists of childhood. One of my earliest memories is that of my father telling me stories of Victor Trumper to keep me awake at dinner time. Trumper became a childhood hero and has remained one. From those stories about Trumper's genius, his kindness, his humanity and the grace of his batting – the last quality confirmed by that unforgettable photograph of his glorious straight drive – I came to associate cricket, in my own boyish and starry-eyed way, with all that was good, noble and worthwhile.

Growing up in a household where cricket talk was incessant, through some inexplicable cultural and intellectual osmosis, even without my ever realizing it, cricket came to occupy large acres of my sensibilities and mental space. I devoured my father's massive cricket library, discussed and argued with him, had a dab at the game in school, college and on the Maidan and watched it at Eden Gardens, on the Maidan and in

grounds across England. By the time I was a young man, cricket had become a part of my identity.

I lost that identity the day, in April 2000, the former South African captain, Hansie Cronje admitted that he had taken money from bookies to fix matches and had encouraged other players to do the same. Something important went out of my life that day and since then I haven't switched on the television to watch a cricket match. I am suffering from the pangs of betrayal.

The report of the Central Bureau of Investigation in India has not helped my condition. But it has not come as a complete surprise. It has only confirmed my worst fears. The report is nothing short of devastating. It indicts an Indian captain and four other players for taking money from bookies to fix matches and to pass on vital information which could influence betting odds. It points the gun of suspicion at a number of foreign players, among whom there are three who captained their respective national sides. The report unveils an elaborate network of bookies and mafia dons who had spread their tentacles into players' dressing rooms. It rips the masks off players who in the guise of being sportsmen sold, without a qualm, their own and their country's dignity.

Richie Benaud has called them 'bastards' One cannot hope to improve on his choice of epithets

In 1932-33, during the Bodyline series between Australia and England, the Aussie captain, Bill Woodfull told the English manager, Pelham Warner, 'There are two teams out there on the oval One is playing cricket, the other is not This game is too good to be spoilt It is time some people got out of it ' This comment precipitated a crisis in the cricketing world But compared to what has been revealed now, the Bodyline crisis was child's play It is clear that a large number of players, irrespective of country, have not been playing cricket

One cannot also avoid the impression that players and officials not directly implicated in match fixing and taking bribes from bookies were aware of what was going on and preferred, for reasons and motives one can only guess at, to remain silent They were complicit through their silence Woodfull's injunction, 'It is time some people got out of it,' might mean under the present circumstances a cleaning of the Augean stables In 1932, it could be said with a degree of confidence that 'the game is too good to be spoilt 'Today, the game is already spoilt and spoilt rotten Purification is impossible through half measures

Despite the hue and cry that has ensued in India after the CBI report and in South Africa after Cronje's confession, certain features of this shameful episode are not being given the attention that they deserve Cronje said that during the tour of India in 1996, before the final one day international, he was made an offer of \$ 200,000 if the South African team threw away the match Cronje placed the proposal before the entire team in a team meeting The offer was

rejected After the meeting some of the players were curious to know if the offer could be raised Cronje spoke to the person concerned and the sum was raised to \$ 300,000 It was an agreement within the South African side that such an offer would be accepted only if there was unanimity among the players

What is significant here is that though three players – Andrew Hudson, Darryl Cullinan and Derek Crookes – spoke strongly against the proposal, nobody told the South African captain that it was an insult to place such a proposal to the team Nobody stood up in the team meeting to say that he refused to play under a captain who could even consider a proposal to throw away a match The unanimity clause is an euphemism for a conspiracy of silence None of the cricketers informed the South African Board of what their captain was up to There are grounds to believe that even had the Board been informed no action would have been taken

Bob Woolmer, the South African coach, has revealed that he had in fact told Ali Bacher, the head of the South African Cricket Board, about Cronje's attempts to fix matches in 1996 Nothing happened There was in all probability a chain of complicity It also appears that Ali Bacher had contacts with a bookie codenamed 'Mr R' whose identity he tried to protect There are no explanations forthcoming for his hobnobbing with a bookie There is nothing that cricket officials have done or said which inspires the confidence that they are determined to clean up the game The glaring fact is that had the Delhi police not accidentally stumbled upon Cronje's phone connections, cricket boards on their own would have taken no action The game would have continued in its rotten state

It is significant that the former colonies of Great Britain, especially South Africa and India, have taken concrete steps to enquire into the betting and match fixing scandals Neither England nor Australia has moved in this direction If anything, they have tried to soft pedal and cover up The International Cricket Council is yet to announce what punitive action should be taken against the guilty It is important to recall that this same august body, despite conclusive evidence against Shane Warne and Mark Waugh (evidence which the Australian Cricket Board tried to suppress), did not insist that the ACB should impose stricter punishments on the two players

Cricket officialdom is taking recourse to legal niceties Is the evidence enough? Is it too circumstantial? And so on The matter is more than legal There is an ethical point involved Here were players who had been paid to play and win, in practice they had done the exact opposite Millions of people had paid good money to watch them perform in the expectation they would be sincere and good sportsmen when in reality they were no more than petty crooks trying to get rich quick They toyed with that most precious of human emotions, trust

In India, and elsewhere too, there are no laws against fixing matches and taking money from bookies When laws were made nobody conceived that such things were possible The players can be nabbed for not paying legitimate taxes on their earnings Is that enough for people who sold their country's honour and the goodwill of a game for monetary gain?

The answer is an obvious no So how can they be punished if the corpus of evidence is insufficient to convict them in a court of law? This is a case where one has to look outside the

realm of the rule of law In India, at least, there existed – and maybe still does in the rural world such modes of punishment The guilty should be made targets of an orchestrated social boycott A person like Azharuddin should be barred from entering all establishments which carry the sign ‘rights of admission reserved’ This will keep him out of hotels, restaurants, clubs and so on Shops should refuse to sell him their products This will be a modern equivalent of the traditional *naudhobi bandh*

Someone like Azharuddin has indeed committed a crime against the entire community and, given the popularity of cricket in India, against the nation The punishment against him should come from the entire community and not be confined to the niceties of the legal process This might sound harsh but one has to keep in mind the enormity of what he and his ilk have done

Whatever the punishment, it may not serve to redeem cricket The game will never be the same The days of innocence have been gobbled up by sponsors and Sodom All over the cricketing world beastly people have made our time and the game we loved into nothing

It is difficult to comprehend how memories affect one in middle age For days, the past is an inert record of past events, long forgotten Then suddenly, the past explodes inside with a palpable emotional force – in the image of the parks in Oxford on a crisp May morning and the recollection of the ball hitting the willow and the sound of church bells in the background, in the image of Gary Sobers poised after the finish of a cover drive One is astonished to find oneself with tears on one’s cheeks while rustling through one’s cricket books

What can bookies and punters who have never loved cricket understand of such sentiments?

Partition and memory

URVASHI BUTALIA

TWO seemingly unconnected stories form the starting point for these reflections Some months ago I visited Pakistan with Bir Bahadur Singh, a seventy-year old Sikh from Rawalpindi district Previous to March 1947, Bir Bahadur’s family had lived for many years in Saintha village, the only Sikh family in a village of Muslims When they sensed that trouble was brewing, his father moved the family to Thoa Khalsa, a Sikh majority village nearby Ironically, and tragically, it was in Thoa Khalsa that Bir Bahadur’s family came under attack, and it was here his father took the extreme step of killing his daughter, Bir Bahadur’s sister, because he feared she would be raped and/or converted

As Thoa Khalsa and its nearby villages had begun to come under attack, a group of Muslims from Saintha, led by the village headman Sajawal Khan, came to offer shelter in Saintha to Bir Bahadur’s family His father refused because he no longer trusted the people he had lived with all his life Bir Bahadur has never forgotten this rejection This was the

first time he was returning to his 'home' after that time

As we wound our way towards Rawalpindi district and Saintha village, I asked Bir Bahadur what it was that he looked forward to most on this visit. What did he want to see, to do? 'I want to see my home,' he answered, 'and my childhood friend, Sadq Khan (son of Sajawal Khan). And I want to drink the water from the village well, to drink it from the hand of a Muslim, and to eat in a Muslim's house.'

I wasn't surprised at this because Bir Bahadur had told me time and again that he regretted how Hindus had treated Muslims where he lived, and wanted to find some way to make amends. 'After all,' he said to me at Lahore airport, 'once you have fought, what is left other than to make up.'

Once in the village Bir Bahadur was welcomed warmly by his old friends, many of whom were still alive and remembered him well. When he asked to be taken to the village well where he wanted to drink water from the hand of a Muslim, no one seemed to think it strange and a couple of young people were dispatched to bring a glass. Water from the well was then offered to him and he drank of it, deeply, sprinkling what was left in the glass on his forehead and turban.

The second story has to do with a different place, a different time, a different context. Shortly after the journey to Saintha village, I spent some time in Japan. Here, through many conversations and some reading, and particularly through discussions with women activists, I became aware of a number of debates on the question of war memory.

While many younger people were unaware that Japan had even been in a war with the United States, the question of memories of this, and previous wars, was very much

alive among activists and academics. Women's groups from all over the country accused the state of a deliberate, selective amnesia about the question of sexual slavery in wartime. Why was it that this shameful aspect of Japan's history found no mention in school textbooks? Why was it that the memories of women who had served as sexual slaves were so often discounted?

They urged the state to recognize that it had deliberately used women and their bodies, that it had behaved in a patriarchal, masculinist way and had then blanked out this memory. They asked that the state recognize its role and more, that it make reparation to the women concerned, thereby beginning the process, for them, and for the Japanese people in general, of healing and reconciliation, not only with the individuals but also with the nations they come from.

For me, these two rather different stories point to somewhat similar questions. In many ways the war is to Japan what the Partition is to India – a part of its past that it would rather forget, something that turned Japanese society into a violent, brutal people (and I speak not only of the World War but also of Japan's attacks on China in the thirties) in the same way as the violence and brutality of Partition is something which India would rather forget. Remembering it means having to face up to the reality that there was a dark side to the euphoria of Independence. And yet, in both instances, memories persist, they come back to haunt us, they may take new and different forms, but they don't easily go away. And often, just when we think we have put a particular memory to rest, it returns.

In Japan, people must have only just begun to breathe a collective sigh of relief at its 'disappearance' when

the issue of sexual slavery surfaced in the mid-eighties. No one really knows what made the first of the 'comfort women' speak out, but one can speculate that it could have had something to do with the existence worldwide of a women's movement and the awareness it has created. Today, a number of women have told their stories and written first-hand accounts of what they lived through – even as I write, a public hearing is taking place in Japan where the testimonies of comfort women are being heard by judges from different parts of the world.

Memories of violence clearly do not go away easily. Bir Bahadur is not the only person I have spoken to who has, for more than half a century, carried within him the memory of that time. But along with the memory of the violence, Bir Bahadur also carried a desire to offer some kind of reconciliation, and this too is not an uncommon phenomenon. To Bir Bahadur specifically, what mattered most was that he find a way to return to Saintha and seek forgiveness from his friends, to restore trust, to somehow make amends, to extend again the hand of friendship. Having done so, he felt able to get back to his own life, to be at peace with himself.

For others, memories may take a different shape and dictate a different course of action. My father, who left Lahore on the 14th of August 1947 has always nurtured a desire to return – not so much to retrace his roots, as to locate one of his closest friends and somehow make contact with him again. The memory of that hastily truncated friendship has stayed with him – and it was only recently that, at age 80, he was able to revisit Pakistan. He managed to locate not his friend (who was dead by then) but his son. He came back a happy man, the memory laid to rest.

Memory is a complex thing, however, and remembering Partition does not mean only recalling the violence of the time. For every story of violence and enmity, there is a story of friendship and love, and it is as important to recall those as it is to look at stories of violence. Sometimes the two are intertwined as in Bir Bahadur's story where the violence is internal to the community, although its causes may lie elsewhere, and friendship comes from 'outside', so to speak.

But the questions I want to raise here are different. Partition represents, among many things, the moment of nation-making for India. We might ask how the Indian state, and the Indian people, have memorialized this moment. We might further ask how can such moments be memorialized, particularly when the histories they speak of are violent ones? Or, indeed, when the histories they seek to memorialize are living histories, those whose protagonists are still around, those whose influence is still visible in our lives. Further, and to me particularly important, is the next question even if we recognize that acknowledging, admitting memory in the process of healing and reconciliation is an important step, how do we actually go about doing this?

This is where thoughts on war and memory in Japan come back to me. In Japan there has, for many years, been a debate on how the history of Japan's role in China, and indeed Japan's experience in the World Wars, can be taught in schools. Currently, there is a kind of 'censorship' – often self-imposed but with the tacit approval, and sometimes active intervention – of the state. Thus the Japanese attack on China, and the brutality of the Japanese armies in Nanking, is not even called by the epithet of

'aggression'. Rather it is simply called the 'advance into China'.

While many Japanese intellectuals and members of the intelligentsia oppose this and demand a more honest representation, there is a powerful lobby that argues for the use of such euphemisms in the name of national interest. While the army's role merits at least a discussion about whether it should be called an advance or aggression, the experience of sexual slavery does not even figure in these debates. We might draw parallels with the way Partition is represented in our history textbooks: do we hear the voices of women, children, minorities in such histories? Do such histories discuss at all the question of violence? And, importantly, can they discuss the question of violence?

It is this last question I want to return to. Some years ago I published a book on Partition (*The Other Side of Silence*, Penguin India, 1998). At the time, I argued that it was important for us to remember our past, and not to pretend that it did not exist. While I still hold firmly to this belief, I am now concerned with another question: how do we remember our past? Or, how do we talk about a violent past in such a way that we do not further increase and exacerbate the cycle of violence?

To take a more concrete example, if we were to think seriously about attempting to include a more realistic history of Partition in our textbooks, to teach the young about Partition, how could we do it in a way that would remain true to the 'facts' – which include some very violent histories – while ensuring that the violence was neither legitimised, sanitized, nor passed on? Another way of putting it would be: how can we write non-violent histories of Partition while ensuring that the violence is not glossed over? While I have asked myself these

questions for considerable time, I have no easy answers to them.

However, I think these questions become particularly important today because of the increasingly communalized atmosphere we live in, for memory never exists in the abstract. The way people remember particular events and histories dictates the way they relate to the world around them, and how they act in this world. It is our past that directs us to our future, and we therefore need to deal with the question of the use and abuse of the past in order to work towards the kind of future we want.

Krishna Sobti talks about how Partition is difficult to forget but dangerous to remember. Today, when Partition memories are surfacing in different kinds of explorations – whether academic or otherwise – this difficulty is more evident than ever. Some of these memories are extremely painful, often they bring back a sense of loss, of anguish, sometimes they bring back resentment. Equally, the danger of remembering has never been greater for this surfacing of histories is taking place at a time when India is going through a resurgence of 'nationalism' – this time an ugly, majoritarian nationalism, and there are ways in which such memories are being drawn into the service of this nationalism. There are any number of examples of the abuse of such memories that I do not really need to list them here.

What makes the need for the kind of carefulness I am arguing for even more necessary – and more difficult – is that we function today in a rapidly globalizing world, where the catchwords seem to be 'freedom', 'opening up' and so on. The illusion of 'freedom' makes the plea for caution seem unnecessary. And yet, caution, or sensitivity is all too necessary for, as elsewhere in the world, the pull

of the global, borderless world goes together with the development of identity politics and movements based on assertions of ethnicity, religion, and so on

Of course it is also important to recognize that while majoritarian nationalism is at an all-time high, there has also never been such a move to friendship and crossing of borders between India and Pakistan as there is now. While the two states continue to posture and spew rhetoric and hate, at a people-to-people level there is considerable movement across borders. And here, especially when the journeys are planned – such as with a group of journalists or women activists or human rights workers – there is also considerable openness in the discussions that take place, even while differences remain and are openly articulated. Perhaps it is in these journeys that we can look for hope, for a kind of reconciliation.

When added to the kinds of journeys Bir Bahadur and my father – and innumerable others – have made, these might offer us a way to approach the next important step, articulated so well by Bir Bahadur: ‘After you have fought, what is there left but reconciliation?’

But I do feel that as people concerned for the future of our countries and indeed of our world, we need to work hard at doing away with our selective amnesia about the past, to come face to face with our memories, and to begin from there the process of learning how to deal with the future. Let me put it this way. If Indians of my generation had known, from the beginning, the different and plural truths of what happened when our country was partitioned, if we had not been fed on only one side of the story, we might have grown up to be better, more tolerant, more confident and indeed better human beings. Is this not after all, what we are all striving for?

Singing a nation into being

UKMINI BHAYA NAIR

THANKS to cable television, the soap opera of the recent American elections reached the whole wide world. At one of the more serious of these debates in the CNN studios, I observed a commentator, Stuart Rothenberg, astonish everyone by putting the endless rounds of analysis aside for a moment and suggesting instead that it would be nice to have a ‘song or jingle’ which told the story of ‘The Florida Recount’! Now, what prompted this strange need for simple song in the middle of a fraught, twenty-first century presidential campaign?

In this essay, I will try to examine the role that a certain category of ‘songs of the nation’ – namely, national anthems – play in the construction of the modern state. What crises did they once communicate, and do such expressions of national pride remain relevant in today’s ‘global’ culture or have they pretty much lost their shine?

We must begin by noting that these are no ordinary songs. National anthems are psychological dynamos. They routinely succeed in getting whole countries to rise to their feet. Think about it – how on earth do the repetitive, often banal, compositions we call ‘national anthems’ manage this enormous physical arousal, this concerted magic? If one were scientifically inclined, one could begin with a simple experiment to measure the galvanic skin response (GSR) to these lyrics across social groups, and I feel sure that even the most sceptical would soon be convinced that the

potent mix of emotive themes and energetic music in an anthem regularly contributes to a massive rush of adrenalin, no matter how phlegmatic or cynical its audience

For a true visceral reaction displayed in the public spaces of modernity, one can confidently assert that, even now, national anthems offer soccer matches a run for their money. It is true that anecdotal evidence does indicate that in the last fifty years or so, post-war, the importance of national anthems has waned worldwide. Their soul-stirring strains are no longer heard in cinema halls or quite so often over loudspeakers at political meetings. At the same time, over thirty new nations have been added to the roster of the world's countries and this sort of data promotes a contrary view. It implies that the national anthem still maintains a pervasive and ubiquitous presence, turning up everywhere from humble school functions in remote villages to presidential palaces amidst impressive pomp and glitter.

The anthem has also found smart new homes. Today, a primary search-and-find tool is undoubtedly the Internet – and here again we are in for surprises. The web-sites that have sprung up overnight in this new manifestation of the expanding arena of community reveal a very strong undercurrent of interest in the discourse of the national anthem. One such exemplary site is David Kendall's 'Anthem Reference Page' which provides detailed and careful information about 98% of anthems currently in use!

Articles such as this one must be read in conjunction with these other efforts if we wish to understand the continuing role of the national anthem in a contemporary scenario where so much is changing so fast that it becomes urgent to ask what remains stable and unchanging? Exploring the

'meaning' of the national anthem in the present 'multicultural' set up may in fact lead us to ask fundamental questions about who we are and about the factors which confer on us our core sense of 'belonging'.

From the standard definition below, for example, we learn that nationalism counts as 'the most powerful force in the history of the modern world'. Despite the unsubtle nature of this claim, I shall take the risk of pursuing this line of argument further by suggesting that national anthems are possibly the most potent emotional expression of the force in question. So, what's nationalism?

'Nationalism refers to the political and social attitudes of groups of people who share a common culture, language and territory, as well as common aims and purposes, and thus feel a deep-seated loyalty to the group to which they belong, as opposed to other groups. Nationalism in the modern sense dates from the French revolution but had its roots in the rise of strong centralized monarchies, in the economic doctrine of mercantilism and the growth of a substantial middle class. Nationalism today is also associated with any drive for national unification or independence. It can also represent a destructive force in multinational states.

'Exalts the nation state as the ideal form of political organization with an over-riding claim on the loyalty of its citizens. A moving force in the rebellion of colonial people and the resistance of nations and national minorities threatened with subjugation by more powerful states. Despite the rival claims of class-war on the one hand and internationalism on the other, nationalism as a mass emotion has been the most powerful force in the history of the modern world' (*The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*)

The history of nationalism, in short, has been synonymous with struggle. Those primitive loyalties that we naively thought we had left behind when we entered 'the modern age' are reborn in the context of the nation state. National anthems are thus new codes for old feelings of bondage and trust.

Befitting their etymological roots in the antiphonal chants of church music, contemporary national anthems contain at their emotional core sentiments akin to religious faith. They are secular prayers. As the *Shorter Oxford* tells us, an anthem may be defined 'loosely as poetry, a song, as of praise or gladness which is technically a hymn'. Both in their origin and in their essence, national anthems cannot help but display their celebratory nature. Consider, for example, the anthem of Afghanistan, heading the alphabetic chain of anthems and that of Zimbabwe, closing the circle.

AFGHANISTAN

So long as there is the earth and the heavens,
So long as the world endures,
So long as there is life in the world,
So long as a single Afghan breathes,
There will be this Afghanistan

Long live the Afghan nation
Long live the Republic
Forever there be our national unity,
Forever there be the Afghan nation and the Republic
Forever the Afghan nation, the Republic and National Unity

ZIMBABWE

O lift high the banner, the flag of Zimbabwe
The symbol of freedom proclaiming victory
We praise our heroes' sacrifice,
And vow to keep our land from foes,
And may the Almighty protect and bless our land

O lovely Zimbabwe, so wondrously adorned
With mountains and rivers cascading, flowing free,
May rain abound, and fertile fields,
May we be fed, our labour blessed,
And may the Almighty protect and bless our land

O God, we beseech Thee to bless our native land
The land of our fathers bestowed upon us all,
From Zambezi to Limpopo
May leaders be exemplary,
And may the Almighty protect and bless our land

Eternity on earth appears as a utopian signifier within the Afghan national anthem. Faith in God is transposed to faith in an ideal community that exists in perfect unity – ‘so long as a single Afghan lives’. In the Zimbabwean anthem, images of paradise are likewise summoned up by the vision of a ‘wondrously adorned’ landscape and the Almighty makes an explicit appearance as the final arbiter within a patriarchal hierarchy which includes national ‘leaders’. These anthems derive from widely divergent histories, locations and cultures, yet the similarities between them are striking – for instance, it is implicitly understood in both cases that the state is always under potential siege. Malevolent forces from outside, serpents, threaten the Eden enclosure of the state at all times. Hence, the sacrifice of national heroes, a spill of blood and guts, is ‘eternally’ needed to ‘protect’ it.

A complete narrative of the nation as a ‘house of God’ is thus incorporated within national anthems today, linking a religious past with a secular future. Instances such as these demonstrate that the divine roots of the national anthem have hardly been eliminated even when the themes they touch upon are supposedly mundane.

One of the lacunae in nationalist discourse which has always puzzled me is the fact that so few parodies of national anthems spring to mind. As formal structures, simple and moralistic, national anthems simply cry out for mimic versions. But *where are the parodies?* The distance between

the song and the ‘jingle’ mentioned by Rothenberg in his plea for a record of the ‘Gush and Bore’ campaign, appears to constitute an almost unbridgeable abyss. Why is this?

My own hypothesis is that, just as there is a strong social taboo against mocking sacred literature, there exists a parallel injunction against ‘desecrating’ a national anthem – a psychological restriction that can sometimes lead to situations of delicious irony.

Consider, for instance, the case of our own national anthem, rich in anecdotal evidence about the strange predicament of Rabindranath Tagore, unarguably India’s most towering literary figure in the last century. Although in the forefront of India’s freedom movement, Tagore thought of himself as a staunch ‘internationalist’, bitterly opposed to a narrow nationalism, which he associated with fascism in Europe and religious fundamentalism within India. Even so, his version of the nation is dedicated, predictably, to a supreme ‘deity’ – *bharat bhagya vidhata* – who doubles up conveniently as Congress National Committee as well as, perhaps, the Prince of Wales.

Wales, veils, wails, wells, whales? If parody were indeed permitted within the arena of anthems, the possibilities would be endless. Yet no one, to my knowledge, has publicly crossed the *Lakshman rekha* that protects ‘Jana, Gana, Mana’ from its mimic, potentially hydra-headed, *rakshasha* counterparts. Many, however, are familiar with the seductive story that has circulated for several decades around Tagore’s composition of the Indian national anthem.

‘Jana Gana Mana is today India’s national anthem. Officially, it was written for the meeting of the Indian National Congress in December 1911, where it was sung for the first time.

Most probably it was really composed for the occasion of George V’s coronation at the Durbar held in Delhi in the same month – but not sung at the Durbar because it was insufficiently “loyal”. The following year in London one of Tagore’s Bengali friends explained how the song came about to W B Yeats who told Ezra Pound, who then passed the story on to his father in the USA, calling it a joke “worthy of Voltaire” – “The national committee came to Mr Tagore and asked him to write them something [for the Delhi Durbar]. And as you know Mr Tagore is very obliging. And all that afternoon he tried to write them a poem, and he *could not*. And that evening the poet as usual retired to his meditation. And in the morning he descended with a sheet of paper.” He said, “Here is poem I’ve written. It is addressed to the deity. But you may give it to the national committee. Perhaps it will content them.” (From *The Myriad Minded Man* by Andrew Robinson and Krishna Dutta)

A joke ‘worthy of Voltaire’ comprises the complicated background to this particular national anthem. Yet its literary and political antecedents seem to have done nothing to prevent Tagore’s evocative words, set to music by Pandit Ravi Shankar, from being sung with gusto at every possible forum. From which evidence, it might be concluded that a national anthem, once established, seems to enjoy a sort of magical immunity. It ensconces itself as an indelible part of the cultural repertoire – resistant to mockery, to erasure and to contradictory impulses.

The paradoxes contained within the engagingly plain format of the national anthem are in fact incredibly complex. Sometimes a country turns out to have more than one national anthem – Denmark or Fiji, for ins-

tance These different anthems often mark phases of a country's history One of Fiji's anthems clearly dates back to the time when it was colony, the other is post-colonial, nationalist Denmark's second anthem harks back to a legendary past while the first belongs to contemporary times

At other times, the cultural diversity that a modern state entertains is reflected in the fact that a single country may have up to three or four versions of an anthem in its different languages Zimbabwe's anthem is sung in Shona, Ndebele and English! Confusingly, states or groups not officially recognized by the United Nations may have national anthems Former 'colonies' still loosely affiliated to a 'mother country' occasionally possess this unique characteristic Aruba, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, the Isle of Man and Scotland—all have 'national' anthems but are not listed as 'nations'!

Then there are 'unofficial' national anthems that can rival an official anthem in popularity On our own sub-continent, both Indians and Pakistanis owe allegiance to Mohammad Iqbal's exquisite 'Sare Jahan Se Achcha'

In India, crucial state occasions such as the Republic and Independence Day celebrations are graced by this 'alternative' anthem which seems to work like balm, a salve to remembered pain Under trying circumstances where our neighbouring countries are locked in dispute, a common heritage of memories and aspirations is summoned up by Iqbal's words

Kashmir momentarily becomes not the current battleground where Kargil, Chitthisinghpura and a host of other searing images jostle for space, and the wounds of Partition are forgotten awhile as Iqbal merges visions of a faraway past and an ideal present His Hindustan is an enchanted garden

that its people inhabit amicably as bulbuls or songster birds Who could fail to fall in love with this fairytale account? Indeed, many believe that if ordinary Pakistanis and Indians were to meet at the Wagah border armed with nothing more threatening than Iqbal's poem, they would just fall into each other's enchanted embrace!

On the contrary, if we compare the words of Pakistan's present national anthem with our own, we find that both emphasize a down-to-earth territoriality Tagore, of course, chooses the enumerative path idiosyncratically listing 'Punjab, Sind, Guajrat, Maratha, Dravid, Utkal, Banga' but not, alas, some other constituencies that are just as crucial today At a time when the three new states of Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and Chattisgarh are coming into a troubled existence in this country, while Pakistan faces insurrection in Sind, it is worth looking again at the strategies of 'unification' that our national anthems adopted Unlike Iqbal's alternative anthem, there is less nostalgia here, less dreamy ambiguity and much more assertiveness The Pakistani anthem is not as specific as the Indian, but it seems equally committed to territorial sanctity in its references to a sacred *qaum, mulk, sultanat*

Latin Transliteration of the
Pakistani National Anthem

Pak sarzamin shad bad
Kishware haseen shad bad
Tunishane azmealishan arze
Markazeyaqin shadbad
Pak sarzamin ka nizam
Quwate akhuwat-i awam
Qaum, mulk sultanat
Painda ta binda bad shad
bad man ze le murad
Parchame sitarao hilat
Rahbare tarraqio ka mal
Tarjumane mazishane
hal jane istaqbal
Sayyar, khudae zul jalal

English Translation

Blessed be the sacred land,
Happy be the bounteous realm,
Symbol of high resolve Land of Pakistan
Blessed be thou citadel of faith
The Order of this Sacred Land
Is the might of the brotherhood of the people
May the nation, the country, and the state
Shine in glory everlasting
Blessed be the goal of our ambition
This flag of the Crescent and the Star
Leads the way to progress and perfection,
Interpreter of our past, glory of our present,
Inspiration of our future
Symbol of Almighty's protection

A particularly interesting feature of the Pakistani anthem is its sophisticated focus on the national flag as a 'symbol' of the nation – 'interpreter of our past, glory of our present, inspiration of our future' Here, one might also invoke another sort of evidence provided by recent cinematic ventures such as *Dil Se* or *1942 – A Love Story* in which the *tranga jhanda* figures prominently These 'frames' demonstrate how evocative the graphic image of a flag can be in furthering not just a film's narrative but its 'interpretation' of history

My thesis is that the auditory passion ignited by a national anthem is akin to the visual arousal signalled by a national flag When the two combine, as in the case of the frenetic genius A R Rahman belting out the alternative 'anthem' *Vande Mataram*, the people at large are also moved to near frenzy And recently at the Wagah border in Amritsar, I witnessed yet another conjunction of these potent symbols—flag and anthem Of course, that daily ritual in which our two nations match each others' bravado in equal measure has been described often enough but here is one more rehearsal of a 'story of nation' repeated, as we know, with quotidian gusto and enjoyed by a capacity crowd, especially on the populated Indian side which has kindly built for us an amphitheatre-like structure to facilitate the show

As I have written before, Wagah is authentic Toba Tek Singh country – the same identical strips of no-man’s land on both sides, the double jeep tracks, the sad, divided fields of wheat and the curious populace eyeing each other across tall, spiked gates painted with our respective ‘national colours’ As Gore-Bush brigade, so savvy about the superficiality of sign systems, would no doubt comment in their up-front American democratese – *same difference*

Most of all at Wagah, we observe the strapping soldiers ‘on display’ plumaged to the hilt and stamping up and down in a border-dance that is at once touching and terrifying. But just as my trammelled academic mind is beginning to ask its customary questions about the semiotic significance of these tribal dances, the final bugles blow and the two flags are lowered. Harbir Singh, from the Guru Nanak Dev University, who has accompanied me, points out that there is a split second at the end when the two flags seem to meet as they come down, although they are several feet apart in reality! It is this synchronized moment that the cognoscenti wait for – when music and flags come together in a fantasy of eternal togetherness and separation.

But, says Harbir, if you look up at the cloudless skies above Wagah at that exact time, you are bound to perceive another phenomenon which usually goes silent, unnoticed. It is a flock of birds crossing the border – without fuss, without passports, without national anthems to sing them into existence! And far, far below these freedom flights, a clutch of families from the far corners of the peninsula – Kerala, Bihar, Maharashtra – now straggle, brightly dressed, out of the Wagah camp. There is a visible stimulation, an electric current run-

ning through the crowd at the end of the performance – and a sense of catharsis.

It strikes me that we have just witnessed our essential humanness, in all its vulnerability – its need for symbolic unity, however questionable. And so, I’d want to contend that its logical position as a ‘binding’ centrifugal discourse within the whirling vortex of modernity confers on the national anthem an undeniable authority. The diverse nation as one family is a comforting metaphor that we know well. To extend this comparison to the national anthem would be to assert that it functions as a kind of maternal lullaby – but with a dual purpose. It both soothes the nation, singing it into a moral calm reminiscent of a dream-state, simultaneously, it arouses sentiments that are self-protective and defensive. This psychological conflict between peaceful and aggressive instincts lies at the heart of the national anthem.

Pacifists may find the violence internalized in national anthems hard to take but righteous self-assertion seems to go with the terrain here. A national anthem abounds in cues about ‘membership’ because it works on a principle of exclusion. Some belong by virtue of birth, others don’t. One recalls at this point the Latin root *nasci* (to be born) of the word ‘nation’. The nation is, as it were, the scene or setting of a rebirth – an individual’s second birth as a citizen.

Specific references to a ‘womb’ environment of familiar rivers, mountains, landmarks and symbols thus inevitably shore up and redeem the otherwise bland reassurances of solidarity on offer in an anthem. Reactions to the sound of an anthem are as spontaneous as they would be to maternal speech. They compel us to listen – and to love – without question.

Consistent with my thesis that national anthems are Freudian lullabies for populations that can be as large as a billion, music seems an essential element of the structure of the national anthem. There can be anthems without words – such as those of Spain and Yugoslavia, for instance – but none without pulsating musical rhythms. Most national anthems are made to be marched to and danced to, they abound in choruses and repetitive elements that render them memorable and are consequently the one form of institutionalized poetry that even the most prosaic of a country’s citizens are unable to escape! Anthems, it seems, cannot by their very nature, be anathema.

That the national anthem is such a touchstone of certainties contrasts interestingly with its capacity to instigate uncomfortable queries. Will the nation state – without which the ‘national’ anthem would seem an anomaly – retain its centrality a century or two from now? Who will be responsible for the problems of an overpopulated, aging, environmentally polluted world – self-contained countries or a global community? How much will cultures and even human nature alter in response to the revolutionary, and unpredictable, technologies we have invented? Despite its naivete, the national anthem functions as a natural vehicle for the expression of such deep quandaries about once and future identity. They serve to replay the Ayo-dhyas of the mind.

Conventionally, we know that the beginning of a millennium marks intellectual disquiet. One useful route towards imaging this subliminal anxiety is to imagine yet unborn sub-versions and supra-versions of our present day anthems. We could begin with the notion of a ‘world anthem’ for instance, in which all the nations of

the world want to raise their voices. Chances are that such a venture might turn out to be a contradiction in terms because, as I have said already, national anthems rely on exclusivity. If every one of the world's six billion humans is included, who would be left out except denizens of outer space, animals or plants? I think we can safely conclude that some alien nation – say, of the Martian variety – will turn out to be a probable motif in any putative anthem which seeks to 'unite' the earth's teeming peoples! And it may be worth recalling at this point that 'untie' constitutes a neat anagram of 'unite'.

Plurality, after all, is the logical obverse of that pugnacious call to unity so characteristic of the national anthem. An anthem is predicated on difference, on strands of consciousness tied together that could also come untied. The strenuous avowal of togetherness in an anthem is not accidental, it verbalizes the fundamental unease that cultures have always felt when faced with radical difference. These apprehensions are not necessarily put to rest in an information-rich but empathy-poor world where we have to come to terms every day with so many unique 'types', such an assortment of individual human beings. Now, more than ever, we need to confront those ancient demons of intercultural conflict. And it is here that the national anthem may prove useful as a means of understanding ourselves – creatures who are designed by biology to thirst for union but who thrive on difference.

Karl Marx once called upon the workers of the world to unite for they had nothing to lose but their chains. While playing the game of fantasizing about the national anthems of the future, one might take a leaf out of Marx's great failed book here. Intellectual capital – words, books, ideas

– versus political capitals – Washington, Beijing, Pretoria. The national anthem draws proudly on both sources of history. Read via the lenses of a doctrine of liberation, an anthem is not just about unity. It is about unity as a form of emancipation, of freedom – recalling via its very existence memories of social fights against oppression and the cultural losses imposed by colonial regimes.

Is it possible, then, that the anthems of the future might become delinked from the political confines of nationality? Are national anthems only a step towards other yet unnamed anthems, such as anthems of gender, of race and of other major coalitions that also speak the language of resistance? Or is this a retrograde idea, throwing us back to a divisive past? I believe the answers to these urgent questions can be sought in the first instance at the dynamic but ambiguous intersection of cultures that national anthems so seductively offer.

Finally, I wonder about a whole new constituency. How would the *children* of this nascent century write or rewrite an anthem? For, until they are schooled into learning the story of their nation states, children have other illuminating narratives about how they came into being. I argued a little earlier that in its unselfconscious narcissism, the national anthem is related to the timeless universe of childhood. It is essentially a nursery rhyme for adults disseminated across an entire population, but in the end I want to add that there might well be a disarming wisdom to this process. An anthem, like a child's tale, energizes a collective psyche by invoking foundational myths about self-creation, in this respect, they offer a valuable tool for looking back in wonder and also for looking into our imperilled future with caution. *Jai Hind?*

And then there was the market

P SAINATH

THE last years of the '90s saw food 'surpluses' piling up in South Asia. It wasn't just India with 44 million tons. Even Pakistan and Bangladesh had their moments. At one point these countries together accounted for a grain surplus of well over 50 million tons.

Remarkable since these three nations account for half the world's hungry.

More remarkable since the paradox draws very little debate.

Even a call for discussing this amounts to demanding 'obsolete' practices of the interventionist state. If we hadn't mucked around trying to get the state to play God for 50 years, none of this would have happened. If only we had got it right and let the market play God instead.

Well, we sort of did that for the last ten years. But facts count for little in the Age of Incantation.

Welcome to the world of Market Fundamentalism. To the Final Solution.

I think it was Jeremy Seabrooke who said it first. That a present generation of Indian students is having their heads filled with inanities and clichés about the market the way an earlier one memorised junk about Greek, Roman and British civilisations. (I certainly remember a textbook in the first school I ever went to that had a vivid story on how Horatius held the bridge for Rome.)

Flip channels on television and you can't miss it. Gaggles of elegantly clad and very earnest young men and women speaking breathlessly about The Market (you can hear the capital letters). And of course, the need to 'unleash' its creative energies. It's not only these young who hold this view, though. Several older people do,

too. But perhaps they're somewhat tainted, having romanced other gods in the past. This does not, however, induce much modesty in the line up of editor-analysts we're condemned to hearing forever on the theme.

There is no miracle the market cannot perform. Market forces, as Swaminathan Aiyer argued long ago, are great for the environment. Markets are green. We've learned more since then. *Time* magazine's Charles Krauthammer has laid down that while better-off workers are abandoning the less fortunate ones, the market is rescuing the 'once colonized'. It is in fact the lifeline for 'previously starving Third World peasants'.

Markets are also perfect for the field of public health. So perfect that hundreds of elderly American citizens get some exercise each year as a result. The incredible cost of drugs in their country compels them to drive all the way to Canada to buy medicines there. (But wait a minute, that's a distortion of market.)

The market is not merely inseparable from democracy. It *is* democracy.

Thomas Frank sums up the mindset well in his book *One Market Under God*. 'Markets enjoyed some mystic organic connection to the people, while governments were fundamentally illegitimate. Markets expressed the popular will more articulately and more meaningfully than did mere elections. Markets are where we are most fully human, markets are where we show that we have a soul.'

Hunger is a function of anti-market systems. Want more jobs? Free the market. Crisis, whether in education or agriculture, is best dealt with by not dealing with it at all. Leave it to the market. Let the market decide. Some analysts now even see an intrinsically anti-caste character in the market.

Welcome to the world of Market Fundamentalism. Reaganomics and Thatcherism fought many crusades for the new religion in the 1980s. India in 1991, along with many others, embraced that world with much enthusiasm.

It's a world marked by the steady collapse of restraint on corporate power, in every continent. Inequality among human beings has never been greater any time after World War II. The gap between rich and poor has grown in almost every nation – rich and poor. The distance between the affluent and the dispossessed has been widening in the United States as in India.

The world's richest 200 people, the UNDP's Human Development Report of 1999 informs us, 'more than doubled their net worth in the four years to 1998, to over \$1 trillion. The assets of the top three billionaires are more than the combined GNP of all least developed countries and their 600 million people together.'

The income gap between the top 20 per cent of the world's population and the bottom fifth had more than doubled between 1960 and 1997. In 1998, the top 20 per cent consumed 86 per cent of all goods and services. The bottom 20 per cent made do with 1.3 per cent.

The 1990s saw the inner cities of Los Angeles explode with rage in the world's richest country. Police brutality was merely the spark that set off the fuse. The explosion itself was waiting to happen in a community where the average black male's life expectancy makes East U.P. look progressive.

Imagine how the dispossessed in poor countries coped. In Andhra, the period saw the largest number of suicides ever amongst farmers in that state's history. And it was reflective of the era that Chandrababu Naidu was and remains the most popular chief

minister in the country for the corporate-owned media.

In India as a whole, some 70 million people went below the official poverty line – itself something of a joke – to join the over 300 million already there. Even the World Bank feels compelled to make noises of regret – mainly to cover its own tracks – over the 'slowing down' of 'poverty reduction' in India. (That hasn't deterred its acolytes in India who are far more radical in these matters. They see these noises as wimpish. Muscular markets will sort out the mess. Let them do their thing.)

Are those piled up food stocks in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh really 'surpluses'? Or are they merely unsold excess stock? What if India's record-breaking 200 plus million ton harvest was divided on a basis of minimum calorie requirements among its one billion people? Simply the huge surplus would vanish. So why do the unsold stocks pile up? Because of a big erosion in the purchasing power of the poor. India's 'surplus' is based on sending hundreds of millions of human beings hungry to bed every single night of their lives.

We have a surplus of hunger, not of food. A hungry surplus.

India's entry into the fundamentalist fold was the more devastating thanks to already existing structures. Land relations, in all but three or four states, hold down and bind the poor. Enforced social backwardness helps freeze that picture. The new prescriptions of the 'market' sit atop these highly unequal structures, strengthening the most regressive forces in their war on the poor.

When I first used the term market fundamentalists in a column in 1991, the editor I worked for then said he thought it a great phrase, but couldn't find something shorter? We

were, after all, a tabloid. He did find something, too. He called its theorists 'Market Morons'. If he could survey all that's happened since then, he'd probably feel vindicated.

Market fundamentalism destroys more human lives than any other simply because it cuts across all national, cultural, geographic, religious and other boundaries. It's as much at home in Moscow as in Mumbai or Minnesota. A South Africa – whose advances in the early 1990s thrilled the world – moved swiftly from apartheid to neo-liberalism. It sits as easily in Hindu, Islamic or Christian societies. And it contributes angry, despairing recruits to the armies of all religious fundamentalisms.

Based on the premise that the market is the solution to *all* the problems of the human race, it is, too, a very religious fundamentalism. It has its own Gospel. The Gospel of St. Growth, of St. Choice.

Never mind that growth for growth's sake, as Edward Abbey put it, has proved to be the ideology of the cancer cell. (Years of jobless growth in many societies have shown us that.) Never mind that choice is a dubious candidate for sainthood. If the 1.2 billion very hungry people on the planet had a choice, I suspect they would choose to eat. That they do not suggests that the market gives you a choice only if you have money. The more money you have the greater the choice you enjoy.

But mere facts do not challenge a great faith. (Ask Advani. In his own sphere, he's been peddling that line for years.)

Like every great faith it has its Popes and its Pundits. Its Vatican and its theologies. Its higher and lower clergy. Its cults and its crazies (like those who make documentaries titled 'Greed is Good'). It even has its

would-be Protestant faction – the World Bank has lately been ticking off the IMF for being heartless. (Though that's probably a TV-inspired Good Cop-Bad Cop routine. Incidentally, market fundamentalism has more televangelists than any other religion in the planet. You can see them every night on every channel in just about every country in the world.)

It has its Revealed Word and its prophets. Remember George Gilder, futurist-thinker-guru of the Reagan era? He laid it out way back then. 'It is the entrepreneurs who know the rules of the world and the laws of God.'

It has its temples of learning and its sects. Like The Marie Antoinette School of Economics (or the 'Let them-eat-cake' crowd) in which India is emerging a world leader. Its sacred triad of privatisation, globalisation and hi-tech-fixes-all, doctrines.

Gigantic blow-ups like the South East Asian breakdown are merely an expression of the Wrath of God. Not that Man has disobeyed the message of the Market. But that he has not observed it zealously enough.

It too, pursues a Holy Grail. Some call it the invisible hand of the market.

There will always be doubters and *kafirs*. Those who question the unbridled power of big business and corporations. But as Thomas Frank points out, in the eyes of the fundamentalists, "Those who criticize business are motivated by a hostility to markets roughly akin to racism."

It's a flat world fraying at the edges but its prophets remain firm. For now. Seattle was in fact a small beginning to the kind of larger unrest to follow. The kind of stuff that could make the LA riots look like clean, healthy fun. Yet, meanwhile, there's a lot of money to be made. Apocalypse is not right now.

Backpage

AS a new year gift, the Supreme Court's final order to shift out 'polluting and non-conforming' factories from the precincts of Delhi is quite unparalleled. On a conservative estimate, close to a million people will be affected, adversely. And while no one can seriously defend the existence of polluting and hazardous enterprises in what were once residential areas, the insensitivity to job losses in an economy marked by high unemployment is decidedly troubling.

Not that this legal dispute is new, the Court had passed initial orders in 1996. Characteristically, the administration slept. True, some land in the rural outskirts was acquired and earmarked for relocation. But, neither was a proper survey of 'offending' units carried out, nor were the new sites 'readied' to accommodate the potential incumbents. And while the fear of contempt proceedings against key officials 'forced' the government to close down the factories, no such threat was issued to ensure the preparation of new locations.

Equally, no one bothered to consult, far less take consent of, those whose land was being acquired. It, after all, was for public interest! Forget whether the compensation was fair. Evidently, taking over good farmland without a 'by your leave' and dump polluting industry in the villagers' backyards is acceptable. Those who argue that strict pollution control will be enforced in the new locations may like to ask why this was impossible where the units currently are. Is it surprising that many believe that for the honourable judges their own backyards are more important, social dislocation be damned. And to foreclose discussion, the Court has ordered that no 'stays' by any other bench can be entertained.

The current directive comes close on the heels of the equally 'contentious' ruling lifting the stay on further construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam. And the judgement favouring the luxury hotel industry in Goa in violation of the Coastal Regulation Zone Act. Is it, as a recent article in the EPW points out, that our highest Court takes one position on 'green' issues – foregrounding nature over jobs and output – but veers the other way when the conflict involves big business, more so foreign capital? So in Maharashtra, the ruling is in favour of Enron and in Goa the large hoteliers, but in Delhi the concern is for the health of the populace.

These recent judgements demand detailed scrutiny because very soon we are likely to face the consequences of a concerted move to redefine the relationship between natural resources, the state and the people. On the anvil is a revised Land Acquisition Act designed to permit the state to take over land for private industry. Similar efforts are underway to amend the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, legally allowing the state to acquire land, ostensibly for public purposes (read mines and industry) in tribal areas. Existing law bars non-tribals from enjoying property rights in scheduled areas and the Court has held the Indian state to be non-tribal.

To dilute the CRZ Act, so far overseen by the Ministry of Environment, the proposal is to bring in a new Aquaculture Bill under the Ministry of Rural Development. Evidently, commercial prawn cultivation is now big business. The fact that it has ruined paddy cultivation in coastal areas, or intensified the process of salinity ingress is considered unimportant. Worse, our government proposes to raise a new paramilitary force to protect national parks and sanctuaries, one presumes from small time graziers, wood poachers and residents in the neighbourhood. Finally on the anvil is the new Biodiversity Bill.

Taken together these different moves represent a major assault on the current regimen governing natural resources and their use. As against the plea that these resources be under the trusteeship of local communities, the effort is to either privatise them or hold the state as the eventual owner. On the chopping block are all those communities – tribals, nomads, graziers, fisherfolk – whose home and livelihood is intrinsically tied to the commons. These communities are our most marginalised citizens, least enmeshed in the global capitalist order. They also happen to occupy the last unconquered frontier with its riches of forests, minerals and water.

As invariably happens, these issues will at some stage land up in the portals of the Supreme Court. But does this hallowed institution represent a level ground for adjudicating on matters social and political, or for deciding policy matters? The recent judgements inspire little confidence. Clearly the winter will be long, dark and deep.

Harsh Sethi

Whatever.

Whenever.

Wherever.

At AFL, we move anything and everything to anywhere.

Now tell us when, where and what



 **AFL FREIGHT SYSTEMS • AFL LOGISTICS • AFL INDTRAVELS • AFL SHIPPING • AFL INFOTECH**

Airfreight Limited Neville House Currimbhoy Road Ballard Estate Mumbai-400 001 • Tel. 2656761-7

Ambience/AFL/367

from Oxford

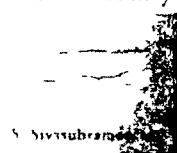
**The National Income of India in the
Twentieth Century**

S Sivasubramanian

This comprehensive volume

- is a compact source of quality data on growth and structural change in national income
- puts forth a comparative picture of the pace and pattern of growth in India
- fills the gaps in national income accounts by estimating real product at 1948-9 prices thereby providing a common base for comparison for pre- and post-independence India
- presents annual estimates of real national income for colonial India, including native states, marshalling all available data and applying standard methodologies
- overcomes pitfalls of earlier conflicting interpretations due to divergent conjectures of economic historians

is National Income
of India in the
Twentieth Century



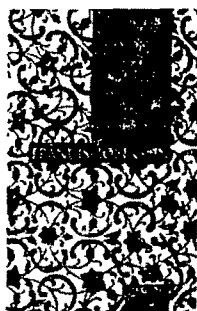
0195650506 2000 215 x 140 mm 692 pp Rs 745

Islam and Muslim History in South Asia

Francis Robinson

It is all too rarely realized that one third of the world's Muslim population lives in South Asia. These Muslims have played a major part in both Islamic history and Indian history. The essays in this volume address key themes in these histories.

Several essays have formed part of major academic debates. The collection is rounded off by a series of responses in the form of long reviews to some of the most important contributions over the past twenty years to the Muslim history of South Asia.



0195649672 2000 215 x 140 mm 310 pp Rs 595

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

2/11 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002 • Oxford House, Apollo Bunder, Mumbai 400001 • Plot No A1-5, Block GP, Sector V, Salt Lake, Electronics Complex, Calcutta 700091 • Oxford House, 219 Anna Salai, Chennai 600006 • A 282, Indira Nagar, Lucknow 226016 • 94, Koramangala Industrial Area, 4th B Cross, 5th Block, Bangalore 560095 • Gayatri Sadan, 2060 Sadashiv Peth, VN Colony, Pune 411030 • Hasan Manzil Complex, Fraser Road, Patna 800001 • 3-5-1107 Narayana, Hyderabad 500029 • Danish Road, Panbazar, Guwahati 781001 • Kesava Buildings, 1 Floor, TC No 25/1437 (2) Thampanoor, Thiruvananthapuram 695001 • SCO 4 & 5, 1 Floor, Sector 17B, Chandigarh 160017

0195649672

seminar

Seminar brings you a discussion each month on the problems which agitate all serious people. Subscribe to it today and participate actively in the thinking life of India...

Subscription rates

Period	India	S Asia	Rest of world
1 year	Rs 250	Rs 350	US\$ 50 £ 35
3 years	Rs 700	Rs 900	US\$ 125 £ 80

* Single copy Rs 25 (annual no Rs 50)

* Add Rs 20 or US\$ 2 or £ 1 on outstation cheques

* Add US\$ 20 or £ 10 for airmail yearly

* Cheque/DD/MO should be made in favour of 'Seminar Publications'

Seminar, F-46, Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi 110001
Tel 3316534 Fax 3316445 E-mail seminar@vsnl.com

We are on the Internet now, please direct your browsers to

www.india-seminar.com

Index

SEMINAR ISSUES 2000

SEMINAR 485 January 2000, **INDIA 1999** a symposium on the year that was

Bakshi, Rajni	Four stories and a question
D'Souza, Dilip	Poverty in the conversions debate
Dixit, J.N.	Knowing the general
Kannan, K.P.	People's planning, Kerala's dilemma
Karnad, Bharat	Asucker's payoff
Khare, Harish	Hamara Vajpayee
Kumar, Radha	A new beginning?
Mohan, Rakesh	A speculative gaze
Murthy, N.R. Narayana	Values first (Interview by Naazneen Karmali)
Ninan, T.N.	An Indian century?
Ollapally, Deepa	India's security environment
Orbinski, James	Ethics of humanitarianism
Rangarajan, Mahesh	Hindutva's 'accursed problem'
Sanghvi, Vir	Bofors' ghost
Thapar, Valmik	Violating India's natural treasures
Vanaik, Achin	Since the Pokhran tests
Varshney, Ashutosh	Deeper but unfinished
Visvanathan, Susan	Workers of the sea
Vittal, N.	Combatting corruption

SEMINAR 486 February 2000, **ENVIRONMENT: MYTH AND REALITY** a symposium re-evaluating some prevailing beliefs

Agarwal, Anil	Interview
Brower, Barbara	Environmental crisis in Nepal
Fairhead, James and Melissa Leach	Webs of power forest loss in Guinea
Heimsath, Arjun M.	Himalayan erosion
Lélé, Sharachchandra and Vasant K. Saberwal	The problem

Lélé, Sharachchandra	Degradation, sustainability or transformation?
Moench, Marcus	India's groundwater challenge
Patwardhan, Anand	Global warming and India
Raffles, Hugh	The Amazon a natural landscape?
Raman, T.R. Shankar	Jhum shifting opinions
Saberwal, Vasant K.	Ecological uncertainty, institutions and myths
Turner, Matthew	Misunderstandings of Sahelian land use ecology

SEMINAR 487 March 2000, **LOOKING EAST** a symposium on the need to refocus our foreign policy

Acharya, Alka	A measured tread to the future
Baru, Sanjaya	The problem
Jaishankar, S.	India-Japan relations after Pokhran II
Jayanth, V.	The political dimensions
Mohan, C. Raja	The Asian balance of power
Rahman, Yusuf Rehan	Sino-Japan relations and India
Ram, A.N.	Historical perspectives
Rao, V.V. Bhanoji	Asean after the crisis
Sen, Chiranjib	Globalization, India and East Asia
Singh, Jasjit	Our eastern neighbour
Suryanarayan, V.	Prospects for a Bay of Bengal community

SEMINAR 488 April 2000, **AGEING** a symposium on the greying of our society

Bose, Ashish	The problem
Detha, Vijay Dan and Komal Kothari	Demographic transition Omission-commission (transcreated by Mohmaya)
Joshi, P.C. and S.N. Sengupta	Health issues
Kishore, Smita	Ageing pains
Sabharwal, M.M.	Interview (by Mala K. Shankardass)

Shankardass, Mala Kapur	Societal responses	da Cunha, Gerson	Steering clear of icebergs
Srivastava, Vinay Kumar	Ageism	Ghosh, Shaktiman	A question of survival
Sujaya, C.P.	National policy on older persons	Jhabvala, Renana	Roles and perceptions
Talib, Mohammad	The last scene	Kanth, Amod K.	Vendors, police and governance
Willigen, John van	Social ageing in India and America	Sharma, R.N.	The politics of urban space
		Singh, Arbind	Organizing street vendors
		Tiwari, Geetam	Encroachers or service providers?

SEMINAR 489 May 2000, **UNHEALTHY TRENDS** a symposium on the state of our public health system

	The problem
Bandewar, Sunita	Unsafe abortion
Banerjee, Madhulika	Whither indigenous medicine
Baru, Rama V.	Privatisation and corporatisation
Duggal, Ravi	Where are we today?
Phadke, Anant	End of drug control?
Ramachandran, Vimala	A perspective on reforms
Ravindran, T.K. Sundari	Engendering health
Visaria, Leela	Innovations in Tamil Nadu

SEMINAR 490 June 2000, **AFRICAN TRANSITIONS** a symposium on the continent's engagement with democracy

Abdul-Raheem, Tajudeen	Globalisation and recolonisation
Agbese, Pita Ogaba	The politics of stable civil-military relations
Fayemi, J. 'Kayode	Security challenges
Friedman, Steven	Do South Africans value democracy?
Ihonvbere, Julius O.	The state, constitutionalism and democratization
Kalu, Anthonia C.	Women in African literature
Mbaku, John Mukum	Minority rights in plural societies
Mvuyekure, Pierre-Damien	From idealism to genocide
Parmar, Chandrika	The problem
Pereira, Charmaine	Feminist knowledge

SEMINAR 491 July 2000, **STREET VENDORS** a symposium on reconciling people's livelihood and urban governance

	The problem
Bhatt, Ela R.	Interview (by Mirai Chatterjee)
Bhowmik, Sharit K.	A raw deal?

SEMINAR 492 August 2000, **PROTECTING NATURE** a symposium on some legal issues concerning the environment

Batra, Manjula	Water rights
C. Surendranath	Justice denied
Dave, S.D.	Musings of a green judge
Dhavan, Rajeev	The wealth of nations revisited
Divan, Shyam	Legislative framework and judicial craftsmanship
Goenka, Debi	Fragile coastline
Krishnan, B.J.	Customary law
Kulkarni, Sharad	The plight of the tribal
Panjwani, Raj	Rights and duties
Sarkar, Sarbani	Settling rights
Sarkar, Sarbani	The problem
Sinha, Prabhas C.	International obligations

SEMINAR 493 September 2000, **REDESIGNING CURRICULA** a symposium on working a framework for school education

Dhankar, Rohit	On curriculum framework
Kumar, Krishna	The problem
Nambissan, Geetha B.	Dealing with deprivation
Rathnam, Aruna	Common curriculum for a democracy?
Sarangapani, Padma M.	The great Indian tradition
Saxena, Sadhna	Looking at literacy
Sinha, Shobha	Acquiring literacy in schools
Talib, Mohammad	The granite reading of a rainbow
Vasavi, A.R.	The 'community gap' in primary education

SEMINAR 494 October 2000, **UNVIABLE UNIVERSITIES** a symposium on the crisis in higher education

	The problem
Abraham, Itty	International trends
Indiresan, P.V.	W(h)ither IITs

Kaul, Rekha	Whitherequity?
Khan, A. Majeed	Encouraging private initiatives
Kumaradoss, Vincent	Autonomy the MCC experience
Lal, C.K.	Continuing confusion in Nepal
Lukose, Ritty	Private-public divides
Menon, A.G. Krishna	Educating the architect
Varghese, N.V.	Reforming educational financing

SEMINAR 495 November 2000, **SITUATING SOCIOLOGY** a symposium on knowledge, institutions and practices in a discipline

Beteille, Andre	Teaching and research
Burman, B.K. Roy	Frozen ice and a silent spring
Deshpande, Satish,	
Nandini Sundar and	
Patricia Uberoi	The problem
Oommen, T.K.	Professionals without professionalism?
Rege, Sharmila	Histories from the borderlands
Saberwal, Satish	On crossing boundaries
Shah, A.M.	Sociology in a regional context
Singh, K. Suresh	A perspective on the ASI
Srivastava, Vinay K.	Teaching anthropology
Uberoi, Patricia	Deja vu?

SEMINAR 496 December 2000, **FRAMEWORKS FOR PEACE** a symposium on efforts to broker peace in Kashmir

	The problem
Ahmed, Eqbal	Beyond mutual destruction
Bhagat, Pamela	Voices (interviews)
Chenoy, Kamal Mitra	Report
Chowdhary, Rekha	Debating autonomy
Guelke, Adrian	The international system and the Indian peace process
Kumar, Radha	Learning from others
Malik, Baljit	A Kashmiri lament
Mattoo, Amitabh	Towards a peace process
Seminarist	Placing people at the centre
Syed, Firdous	Sharing dreams
Tyabji, Nasir	Reportage

FURTHER READING

Looking East	March 2000
Ageing	April 2000
Unheathy Trends	May 2000

Street Vendors	July 2000 ✓
Redesigning Curricula	September 2000
Unviable Universities	October 2000
Situating Sociology	November 2000
Frameworks for Peace	December 2000

COMMENT

Nandini Sundar	Activism and academic angst (April 2000)
Primila Lewis	Jammu journey (May 2000)
Indu Agnihotri	Crossborder exchanges (June 2000)
Dunu Roy	People and planning (July 2000)
Baljit Malik	In praise of life, liberation and freedom (August 2000)
Prasenjit Maiti	Violence of politics and the politics of violence (September 2000)
Sailendra Nath Ghosh	Fundamentals of nature protection (September 2000)
Alok Rai	Giving values a bad name (October 2000)
Ardhendu Sen	Industry at the crossroads (October 2000)
Latha Govindan	Transacting sociology at the school level (November 2000)
Rohan D'Souza	Why Ambedkerites should be against large dams (December 2000)

SEMINAR ISSUES

1959

1 The Party in Power 2 Food for Forty Crores
3 Freedom and Planning 4 The Changing Village

1960

5 Co-operative Farming 6 Two Sectors 7 Our Universities 8 Corruption 9 Films 10 Indians in Africa 11 A Language for India 12 Health 13 The Third World 14 Tribal India 15 Into Space 16 Artists and Art

1961

17 Socialism Today 18 The Census 19 Our Foreign Policy 20 Waste 21 The Writer at Bay 22 Adminis-

tration 23 North and South 24 Communalism
25 Philosophy 26 Science 27 Advertising 28 Music

1962

29 Your Vote 30 Our Democracy 31 The U N
32 On Stage 33 Population Control 34 Election
Analysis 35 India's Defence 36 The Scientist
37 Our Neighbours 38 Indian Agriculture 39 Past
and Present 40 Romanisation

1963

41 The Emergency 42 The Press 43 Taxation
44 Crisis on the Campus 45 Non-Alignment
46 Gandhism 47 Censorship 48 India and Pakistan
49 Panchayati Raj 50 China 51 Emerging
Leadership 52 The Indian Woman ✓

1964

53 The Coming Crisis 54 Worker's Share
55 Scientific Attitude 56 India in the World
57 Needs and Resources 58 Kashmir 59 Jawaharlal
Nehru 60 Prohibition 61 Energy 62 The Consumer
63 Nehru and the Ism 64 Our Changing Values

1965

65 The Bomb 66 Parliament in Crisis 67 Secularism
68 Language 69 Goa 70 Caste 71 At School
72 Public Sector 73 Indo-Soviet Link 74 Money and
Power 75 The War and After 76 Politics of Language

1966

77 We and the World 78 The Plan 79 Our Cities
80 Elections and Power 81 Farms and Food
82 Science in Afro-Asia 83 India's Defence Pattern
84 The I C S 85 The Administrative Jungle 86 Aid
or Trade 87 State Politics 88 Students in Turmoil

1967

89 Your Vote 90 Our Union 91 The Economic
Crisis 92 Our Brain Drain 93 The Cow 94 Election
Outcome 95 Power Patterns 96 Asian Security
97 Books 98 Mass Communication 99 Design for
Living 100 Seminar on Seminar

1968

101 Prices 102 Unctad 103 Recession 104 The
Future of Asia 105 The Budget and The Plan
106 Minority in Crisis 107 Politics and Society
108 Agricultural Revolution 109 Management
Challenge 110 Our Security 111 The Centre and the
States 112 Academic Colonialism

1969

113 The New Left 114 Resources 115 Nationhood
116 Violence 117 Pakistan 118 Gerontocracy
119 Our External Relations 120 The Educated
Unemployed 121 The Congress Party
122 Mahatma Gandhi 123 Conservation 124 Our
Political Parties

1970

125 Secularism in Crisis 126 Our Libraries
127 India's Left 128 Modernisation 129 The Rural
Base 130 Population Planning 131 Foreign
Technology 132 Nation and Community 133 The
Super Powers 134 The U N at 25 135 Two
Neighbours 136 The Constitution

1971

137 India 1970 138 Your Vote 139 Political
Pointers 140 Land Hunger 141 The Blue
Revolution 142 Bangladesh 143 The Economic
Agenda 144 The 1971 Elections 145 China Today
146 A Nuclear India 147 Crisis in the Press
148 Acapoltics

1972

149 India 1971 150 Impact of Bangladesh
151 Secret Societies 152 West Bengal 153 State
Elections 154 Permits and Licenses 155 India in
Asia 156 Decentralisation 157 The Social Sciences
158 New Education 159 Clean Elections 160 The
Mass Line

1973

161 India 1972 162 Mass Housing 163 Calcutta
164 Federal Reorganisation 165 The Status of
Women 166 Our Paralysed Universities 167 Garibi
Hatao 168 A Committed Civil Service 169 Science
Policy 170 No-Cost Reform 171 Mass Transport
172 The Indian Economy

1974

173 India 1973 174 Indian Muslims ✓ 175 Population
Threat 176 The Students Speak 177 The Untouchables
178 Marxism and India 179 The Multinationals
180 The Architect in India 181 The Indian Ocean
182 The Energy Crisis 183 Growing the Food
184 The Cinema Situation

1975

185 India 1974 186 Foreign Policy 187 A Changed
India 188 Inflation 189 Prices and Procurement

190 Medicines for the Masses 191 Urbanisation
192 The System 193 The Economists 194 The
Legacy of Gandhi 195 Global Problems
196 Judgements

1976

197 India 1975 198 The Economic Debate
199 New Trends 200 Life and Living 201 Changing
Communism 202 A Military View 203 Where Do
We Go From Here

SEMINAR ISSUES 204 to 209 were not printed because
of censorship during the Emergency

1977

210 Fear and Freedom 211 Images of the
Emergency 212 The Elections 213 The Correctives
214 Atrocities 215 Rethinkings 216 The Janata
Phase 217 External Alignments 218 The Police
219 Action Agendas 220 Bengal Scenario

1978

221 India 1977 222 Indian Intellectuals
223 Economic Imperatives 224 Populist Politics
225 Defence and Detente 226 Federal Power
Balance 227 The Rural Challenge 228 The Sixth
Plan 229 New Dialogues 230 The Administrator
231 Trauma of the Triangle 232 Another TV

1979

233 India 1978 234 Grassroots Democracy
235 The Village and the Communicator
236 Emerging Questions 237 Threatened
Environment 238 Politics of Science 239 The
Autonomy Myth 240 The Muslim Condition ✓
241 The Election Business 242 Our Fractured
Politics 243 Harijans 244 Economic Scenarios

1980

245 India 1979 246 External Action 247 The
Planets 248 Transition Politics 249 Development
Dimensions 250 The Violent Present 251 Debating
an Agenda 252 Policing 253 The Dangerous
Decade 254 Studying our Society 255 Raw Power
256 Alternatives in Foreign Policy

1981

257 India 1980 258 A Failed Science 259 The
Politicians 260 Parliament 261 Concepts in Change
262 Levels of Consciousness 263 The World of
Microprocessors 264 Search for Consensus

265 The Soviet Connection 266 Confusion in
Economics 267 Peasants and Prices
268 Reservations

1982

269 India 1981 270 The Arming of a Subcontinent
271 India Seen from Abroad 272 The Campus
Scene 273 Refocussings 274 Nepali Reflections
275 Childhood Today 276 Our National Character
277 Searching for Answers 278 The Future of
Politics 279 Playing Games 280 A Confused World

1983

281 India 1982 282 Three Hundred Millions
283 The Parallel Economy 284 Revivalism
285 Breakdown 286 Global Choices 287 Security
288 The Political Options 289 Federal Focus
290 Islam ✓ 291 Social Dilemmas 292 The Messy
Media ✓

1984

293 This India ✓ 294 The Punjab Tangle 295 Marxian
Shadings 296 Directions in Education 297 Values in
Learning 298 Coalition Future 299 New Elites
300 The Sexist Media 301 A Federal Remedy
302 Lawless Laws 303 Pakistan Perceptions
304 Indira Gandhi

1985

305 India 1984 306 Behind the Ballot 307 The
National Condition 308 Using the Army 309 The
Faces of Reality 310 A Warless World
311 Meditation 312 Architectural Pollution
313 The Hindus and Their Isms 314 Issues Within
Issues 315 The Politics of Change 316 The Economy

1986

317 India 1985 318 Purdah Culture 319 Freeing the
Media 320 The Total State 321 Indian English
322 Divisive Currents 323 Scenarios for Change
324 Options in South Asia 325 The Judicial Jungle
- 326 Punjab Perspectives 327 Web of Censorship
328 Priorities

1987

329 India 1986 330 The Politics of Ecology
331 Femicide ✓ 332 Urdu 333 Raj Thapar 1926-1987
334 Interventions ✓ 335 Our Institutions
336 A Second Republic 337 Sri Lanka 338 Past in
the Present 339 Rethinking Theology 340 Romesh
Thapar 1922-1987

1988

341 India 1987 342 Saty 343 A Free Press
344 Integrity 345 Punjab 346 Drought 347 Right
to Work 348 The Voluntary Option 349 New
Dimensions in Science 350 Child Labour
351 Pakistan Scenarios 352 Farmer Power

1989

353 India 1988 354 The Technology Missions
355 New Social Movements 356 Design and
Aesthetics 357 Federalism 358 Foreign Policy in
a Changing World 359 Literature and Society
360 The Panchayati Revival 361 Reflections
362 Parties and Politics 363 The Nehru Era
364 Mythifying History

1990

365 Towards 2000 AD 366 The North East
367 Politics of the State 368 The People's Verdict
369 Health for All? 370 Nuclear Power 371 Cricket
Culture 372 Our Urban Future 373 Socialism in
Crisis 374 Communal Divides 375 Reserved
Futures 376 The Eighth Plan

1991

377 India 1990 378 The Himalaya 379 City
Nostalgia 380 Freeing the Economy 381 After the
Gulf War 382 The Urban Woman 383 Defence
Perspectives 384 New Writing in English
385 Beyond the Vote 386 Repercussions of Change
387 Identity 388 Politicians on Politics

1992

389 India 1991 390 Making Waves 391 The
Linguistic Landscape 392 Kashmir Today 393 The
Soviet Experience 394 Dialogue 395 Real
Concerns 396 AIDS 397 Wooing Japan
398 Understanding Punjab 399 Politics Today
400 Education and Ideology

1993

401 India 1992 402 Ayodhya 403 Growing Up
404 The Telecom Revolution 405 Politics of
Accountability 406 Managing Our Natural
Resources 407 Left Dilemmas 408 Culture,
Communication and Change 409 Our Scientists
410 Population Planning 411 Revivalism and
Identity 412 Marginalised Tribals

1994

413 India 1993 414 Managing Energy 415 Future

of the Mind 416 Islam 417 The BJP 418 Seeds of
Discontent 419 Infrastructure 420 Memories of
Partition 421 Looking Back 422 The U S and Us
423 Parallel Practices 424 Family Matters

1995

425 India 1994 426 Parks, Protection and People
427 Living Treasures 428 The Politics of Health
429 Globalisation and the Unions 430 Justice For
All 431 Voices From the Field 432 The Matter of
U P 433 Food Security 434 Rules and Laws
435 The Limits of Tolerance 436 Learning to Change

1996

437 India 1995 438 Grassroots Governance
439 Prisons and Punishment 440 The Election
Carnival 441 A Question of Rights 442 Nationalism
443 Little Voices, Big Issues 444 Nuclear Fallout
445 The Other City 446 Cultural Studies
447 Reproductive Health 448 Maritime Security

1997

449 India 1996 450 The State of Bihar 451 Demo-
cracy and Development 452 Workers and Unions
453 Symbolic Spaces 454 Political Exhaustion
455 Alternatives in Communication 456 Rethinking
Institutions 457 Empowering Women 458 Media
Trends 459 Unity or Incoherence 460 Futures

1998

461 India 1997 462 Childhood 463 Refugees
464 Right to Education 465 Power Play 466 Wildlife
467 Conserving our Heritage 468 Nuclear
(In)security 469 Swadeshi 470 Gujarat 471 Dalit
472 External Challenges

1999

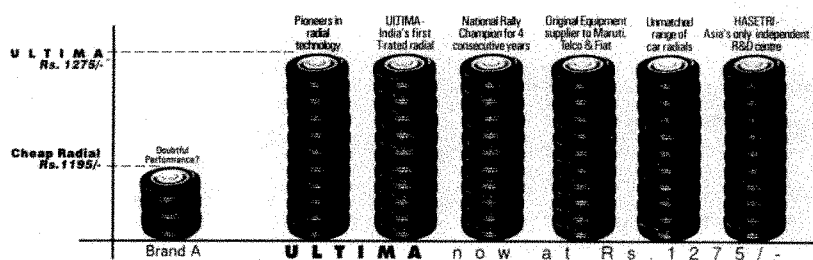
473 India 1998 474 Continuing Concerns
475 Growing Intolerance 476 The Sikh Spirit
477 The Pursuit of Purpose 478 Floods
479 Something Like a War 480 Cruel Choices
481 The Idea of Seminar 482 Family Business
483 Policespeak 484 Multiculturalism

2000

485 India 1999 486 Environment Myth and Reality
487 Looking East 488 Ageing 489 Unhealthy
Trends 490 African Transitions 491 Street Vendors
492 Protecting Nature 493 Redesigning Curricula
494 Unviable Universities 495 Situating Sociology
496 Frameworks For Peace

ARE CHEAP RADIALS TAKING YOU FOR A RIDE?

Judge for yourself.



So, for just Rs. 80/- more than the cheap radial, you can get Ultima from the JK tyre stable.

Ab bolo? Will you settle for anything less?



www.jktyre.com



National Foundation for India

invites applications from Development Journalists

below the age of 40 years for

the award of Fellowships to Nepal or Bangladesh under the
South Asia Media Exchange Programme (SAMEX), 2000-2001.

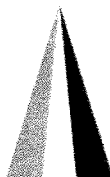
For details contact

Programme Officer (SAMEX),

भारतीय प्रतिष्ठान

National Foundation for India

Last date of receipt
of applications -
January 7, 2001



Zone 4 A, UG Floor, India Habitat Centre Lodhi Road, New Delhi - 110003 Tel.: (011) 4641864/5, 4648490-92

Fax: (011) 4641867 or e-mail: kala@nfi.ren.nic.in

www.imagineads.com 0281



Sweet Memories



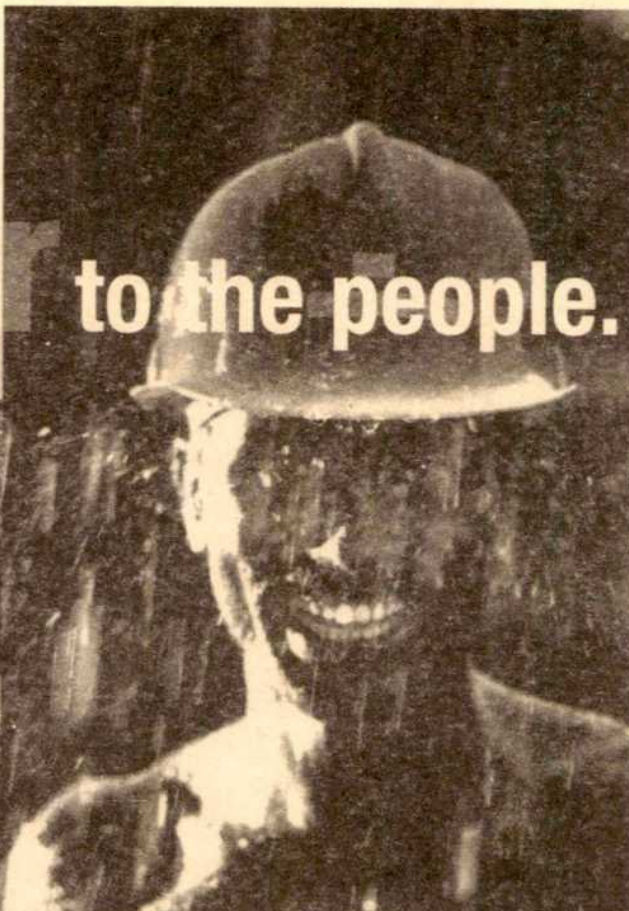


DRESS MATERIAL

SAREES

Mudra: A: RIL: 4243B

Power to the people.



DABHOLPOWER

seminar

THE MONTHLY SYMPOSIUM POST BOX 338 NEW DELHI 110001

a journal which seeks to reflect through free discussion, every shade of Indian thought and aspiration. Each month, SEMINAR deals with a single problem. Those who hold different and at times opposing viewpoints express their thoughts. There is no editorial, no summing up. Readers are free to judge the facts for themselves. In this way it has been possible to answer a real need of today, to gather the facts and ideas of this age and help thinking people to arrive at a certain degree of cohesion and clarity in facing the problem of economics, of politics, of culture.

We are on the Internet now, please direct your browsers to:

www.india-seminar.com

Yes, SEMINAR is an important publication for contemporary India. We would like to help support your efforts and Advertise our company/product through the journal, communicating our message to your several thousand readers. Kindly send SEMINAR's latest Advertisement Rate Card to:

NAME:

ORGANISATION:

ADDRESS:

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Period	India	S. Asia	Rest of World
1 year	Rs 250	Rs 350	US\$ 50 £ 35
3 years	Rs 700	Rs 900	US\$ 125 £ 80

Yes. I feel SEMINAR is essential reading for me/my family. I would like to take a year/years subscription to SEMINAR

NAME:

ADDRESS:

GIFT SUBSCRIPTION

Yes, I feel Mr./Ms.

ADDRESS:

would be interested recipients of a year/years GIFT subscription

from Mr./Ms.

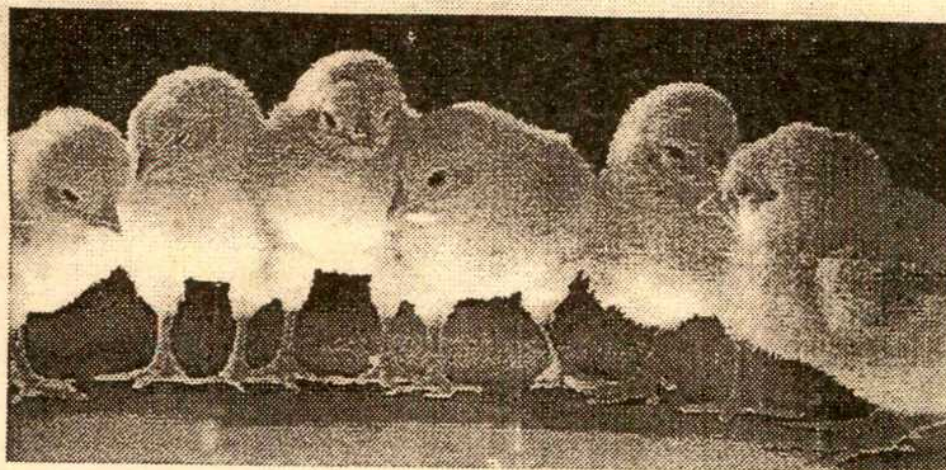
ADDRESS:

to SEMINAR

I am enclosing a cheque/DD/MO of Rs.
(add Rs 20 or US\$ 2 or £ 1 for Non Delhi
cheques; add US\$ 20 or £ 10 for airmail yearly;
cheque/DD/MO should be made in favour of
'Seminar Publications') in full payment for the
above subscription/s

**Seminar Publications, F-46, Malhotra Bldg.,
Janpath, New Delhi 110001 Tel.: 3316534
Fax: 3316445 E-mail: seminar@vsnl.com**

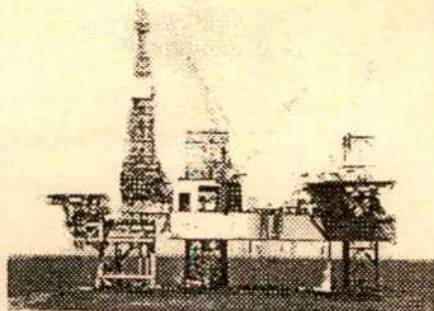
For OIL EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION
one can go to different companies



Or just come to

ONGC

ONGC, India's No. 1 Company. And one of the world's largest Integrated Exploration and Production Companies. Having the right expertise in exploration drilling technology, reservoir studies, engineering and ocean technology — born of over 4 decades of experience. Producer of more than 1 billion boe per day with a reserve of more than 1 billion tonnes of oil and gas, and a turnover of US \$ 3.50 billion and a net profit of US \$ 640 million.



ONGC has set up seven exclusive institutes to meet its R & D needs and consultancy support in all the areas of hydrocarbon sector. From exploration to exploitation, with multi-dimensional expertise in diverse fields of upstream petroleum industry ONGC Institutes' Integrated Services (OIIS) is a common platform for these institutes and provides synergetic expertise in all the areas of upstream oil sector through single window service, of international standards in terms of quality, reliability, cost effectiveness and time consciousness.

ONGC - Exploring New Frontiers Worldwide.



OIL AND NATURAL GAS CORPORATION LTD.

Registered Office

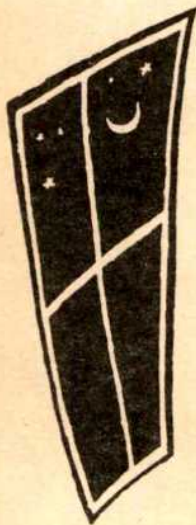
Jeevan Bharti Building, Tower II, 124, Indra Chowk, New Delhi 110001 (INDIA)

Ph. 3316156-3310157-3310878-3310880-3321153 Fax 3316413

Website : <http://www.ongcindia.com>

ONGC

This is 9 year old Julie.
She's going to grow up to either be
a social worker or a sex worker.
And you're going to decide which.



Created by Contract for a cause.



Yes, I, _____ would like to adopt a 'Nanhi Kali' like Julie. ✂ Enclosed is my cheque of Rs. 1200 (@ Rs. 100 p.m.) in favour of K.C. Mahindra Education Trust for one year's education. Please do send me progress reports and a photograph. ✂ Instead of one Nanhi Kali, I would like to adopt _____ Nanhi Kalis for _____ years. Thank you.

• Anonymity of donor is assured. • All donations are exempted under section 80 G of the Income Tax Act.

Take a deep look into Julie's eyes.

What do you see fifteen years from now ? The caring eyes of a field nurse or the blank eyes of a prostitute. The truth is, it could be either, and it depends on you. Through Nanhi Kali, you can become the foster parent of a little girl like Julie. By giving Rs. 100 a month towards her education. Your 'daughter' will be put into school and in fact, you will receive regular reports about her progress including a photograph.

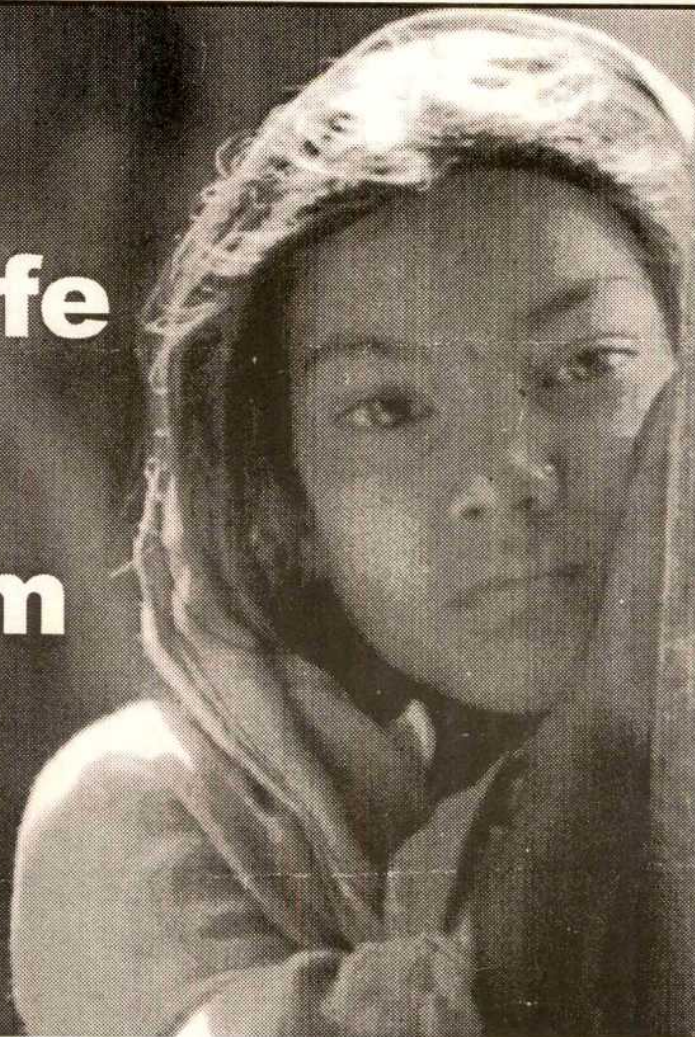
Nanhi Kali is a special project of the K.C. Mahindra Education Trust - a trust set up by one of the most reputed industrial families in India. A trust that's been working since 1953 to promote education and enlightenment across the country. Since Nanhi Kali literally means 'little flower', with the help of people like you, we hope to repair the broken petals of thousands of such underprivileged little girls. So please, look into Julie's eyes and make up your mind, now.

Nanhi Kali³

A project of K. C. Mahindra Education Trust
Cecil Court, Mahakavi Bhushan Marg, Mumbai - 1.
Phone : 2021031. Fax : 2852441.

Ad sponsored by Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.

Not the life we dream of



Pollution, tension, diseases, crowds
the burgeoning population means
the death of the dreams of tomorrow.

We should get ready

Now

to curtail, the galloping infant and maternal
mortality rates

for stabilizing the population growth

the total fertility rate should be 2.1.

Now is the time.

Today for tomorrow



**Population Stabalization Year
2000-2001**

मध्यप्रदेश शासन द्वारा जनहित में प्रसारित



EICHER 11.10

Salient Features :

- Full Air Brakes : 'S' Cam Roller follower type.
- Strong Chassis Frame : Straight Ladder type (6mm Thick).
- Longer Wheel Base (3800 mm).
- More Loading Space 16 feet (L) x 7 feet (W)
- Heavy Duty Tyres : 7.50 x 20-12 PR.
- 190 litres capacity fuel tank suited for long distance operations.
- 10 Material & Labour free services.
- Available in Cabin & Chassis (CBC), Fixed Side Deck (FSD), Drop Side Deck (DSD) and High Side Deck (HSD) Versions.

**When the going gets tough.
The tough gets going.**

Eicher 11.10 -- A 7 ton payload MCV is one of the toughest in its class. Especially designed to withstand the demanding Indian road conditions, this rugged truck from Eicher stable is ideal for long running operations and no matter what comes, gets the tough going.

19/11/2001

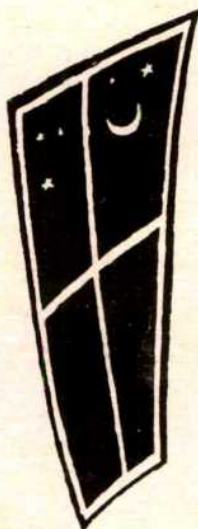
EICHER MOTORS LIMITED
Trucks • Buses • Built-up Vehicles

Regd. Office & Works : 102, Industrial Area No. 1, Pithampur-454775, Dist. Dhar (M.P.) Tel. : 07292-53101-4. Fax : 07292-53109. Cable : EICHWORKS.
Regional Offices : DELHI : Tel. : 6413751, 6413759, 6449772. CALCUTTA : Tel. : 2296773, 2299429. THANE : Tel. : 5340459, 5342483, 5448166.
CHENNAI : Tel. : 8260856, 8264973. BANGALORE : Tel. : 2271870, 2279129. INDORE : Tel. : 432936, 537207. LUCKNOW : Tel. : 370688, 331688.

Visit us at : <http://www.eicherworld.com>

Printed and Published by Malvika Singh on behalf of the Romeshraj Trust from Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi and Printed by her at Kapidhvaj Printers, 639, Bawli Street, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055

This is 9 year old Julie.
 She's going to grow up to either be
 a social worker or a sex worker.
 And you're going to decide which.



Take a deep look into Julie's eyes.
 What do you see fifteen years
 from now ? The caring eyes
 of a field nurse or the blank eyes
 of a prostitute .The truth is,
 it could be either, and it depends
 on you. Through Nanhi Kali,
 you can become the foster parent
 of a little girl like Julie. By giving
 Rs. 100 a month towards her
 education. Your 'daughter' will be
 put into school and in fact, you
 will receive regular reports about
 her progress including a photograph.
 Nanhi Kali is a special project
 of the K.C. Mahindra Education
 Trust - a trust set up by one
 of the most reputed industrial
 families in India. A trust that's
 been working since 1953 to
 promote education and
 enlightenment across the country.
 Since Nanhi Kali literally means
 'little flower', with the help of
 people like you, we hope to
 repair the broken petals of
 thousands of such underprivileged
 little girls. So please,
 look into Julie's eyes and
 make up your mind, now.

Nanhi Kali

A project of K. C. Mahindra Education Trust
 Cecil Court, Mahakavi Bhushan Marg, Mumbai - 1.
 Phone : 2021031. Fax : 2852441.

Created by Contract for a cause.

Yes, I, _____ would like to adopt a 'Nanhi Kali' like Julie. ✉ Enclosed is my cheque of Rs. 1200 (@ Rs. 100 p.m.) in favour of K.C. Mahindra Education Trust for one year's education. Please do send me progress reports and a photograph. ✉ Instead of one Nanhi Kali, I would like to adopt _____ Nanhi Kalis for _____ years. Thank you.
 • Anonymity of donor is assured. • All donations are exempted under section 80 G of the Income Tax Act.

seminar

THE MONTHLY SYMPOSIUM POST BOX 338 NEW DELHI 110001

Founder Editors RAJ & ROMESH THAPAR

A journal which seeks to reflect through free discussion, every shade of Indian thought and aspiration. Each month, a single problem is debated by writers belonging to different persuasions. Opinions expressed have ranged from Janata to Congress, from Sarvodaya to Communist to Independent. And

the non-political specialist too has voiced his views. In this way it has been possible to answer a real need of today: to gather the facts and ideas of this age and to help thinking people arrive at a certain degree of cohesion and clarity in facing the problems of economics, of politics, of culture.

Publisher MALVIKA SINGH

editor TEJBIR SINGH

consulting editor HARSH SETHI

circulation N.K. PILGRI

P-46 Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi-110001; Ph 3316534; Fax 3316445; E-mail seminar@vsnl.com; Website www.india-seminar.com
Single copy: Rs25 Yearly: Rs250; £35; \$50 Three year: Rs700; £80; \$125 Reproduction of material prohibited unless permitted

NEXT MONTH: WASTELAND



Ideal for Farm Houses, Golf Courses, Factory
Premises, Campuses & other Institutions.
In fact for any good looking green.

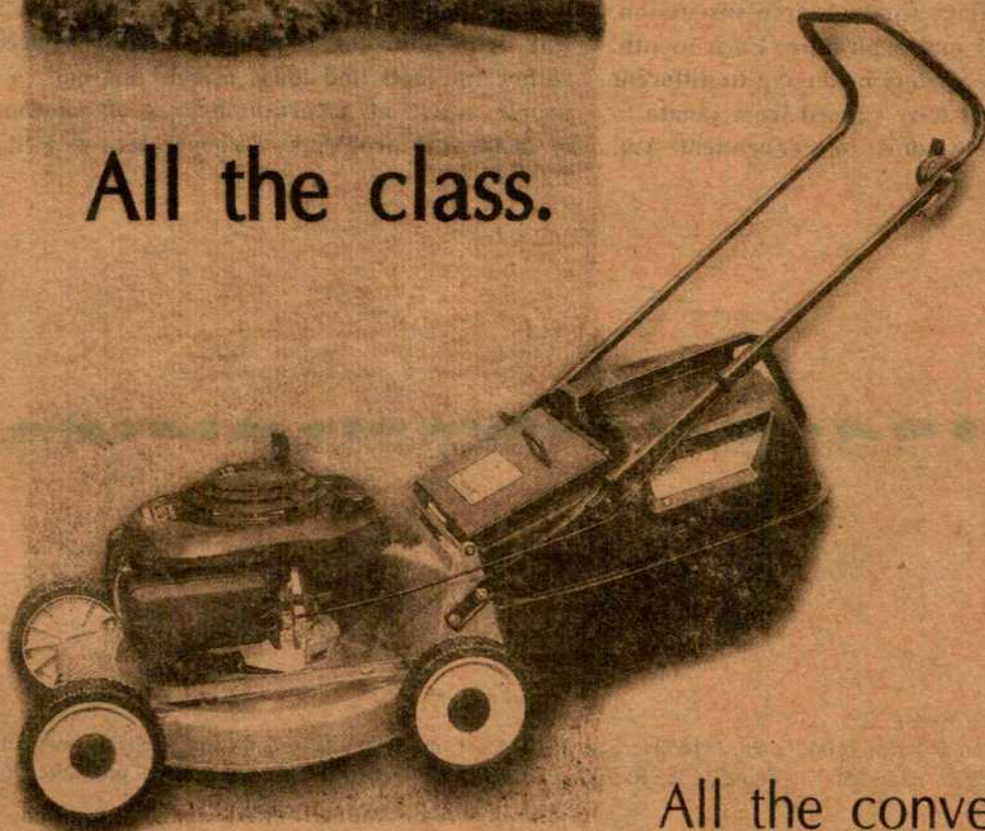
HONDA

presents

The HRU 195PU

LAWN MOWER

All the class.



All the convenience.

HONDA Mowers are sold and serviced in India,
exclusively by:

HONDA

POWER PRODUCTS

For any other Information, contact : Marketing Department
HONDA SIEL POWER PRODUCTS LTD.
5th Floor, Kirti Mahal, 19 Rajendra Place, New Delhi - 110 008
Phones : (011)- 5739103/04/05, 5723528, 5723718,
Fax : 91 -11 - 5752218, 5753652

Easy starting

Clean breathing

**O.H.V. Fuel efficient
engine**

CENTUM

Fab India Overseas Ltd

14, N Block Market, Greater Kailash Part I
New Delhi 110 048

Tel: 6212184, 6212185, 6465497 Main Shop: 6212183
Fabrics: 6445293 N-5 Shop 6445293 N-7 Shop 6212761

10 L.S.C. Nelson Mandela Road
Vasant Kunj
New Delhi 110 070
Tel: 6899775, 6899778

54, 17th Main, IIInd Block
Koramangala
Bangalore 560 034
Tel: 5520004, 5532070

RETAIL AND EXPORT OF HOME FURNISHINGS

new **Godrej**
shaving cream
 for a
smoother,
closer shave

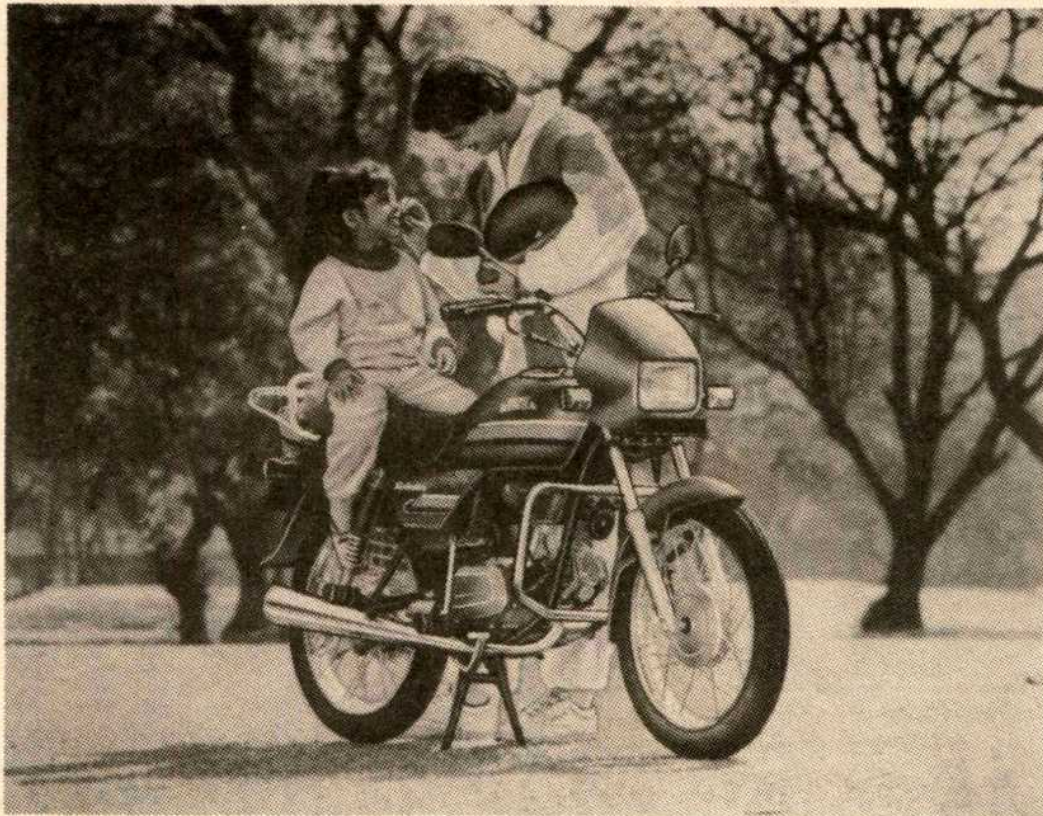


NEW
ATTRACTIVE
LAMITUBE

Now with extra lather for a closer shave. And lanolin which makes the razor glide across your skin for a smooth shaving experience

Madison-G-95g R

CARING TODAY FOR YOUR TOMORROW.



Our children, our future, need the utmost care. And at Hero Honda we care. For you, your family and the environment.

Hero Honda's superior 4-stroke technology and its high fuel-efficiency makes it one of India's most environment-friendly motorcycles.

Little wonder, then, that today over three million proud Hero Honda owners are making an impact on our environment across the country. Ensuring a brighter and a pollution-free tomorrow for the future generation.

Ride a Hero Honda. And show the world that you care.

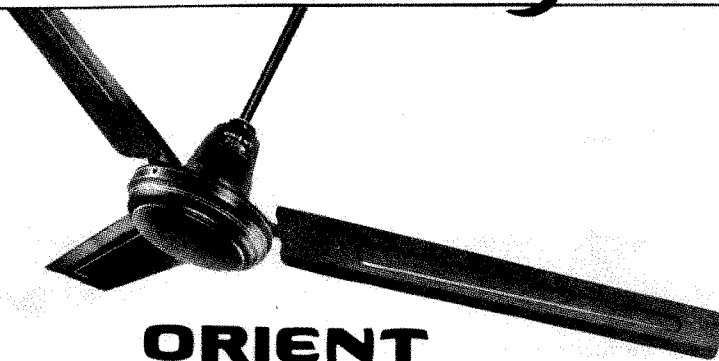


HERO HONDA
Leading the way

Maadhyam/HH/29/62x

India's
largest selling
and most
exported fan

Ab PSPO kyun nahi jaanta?



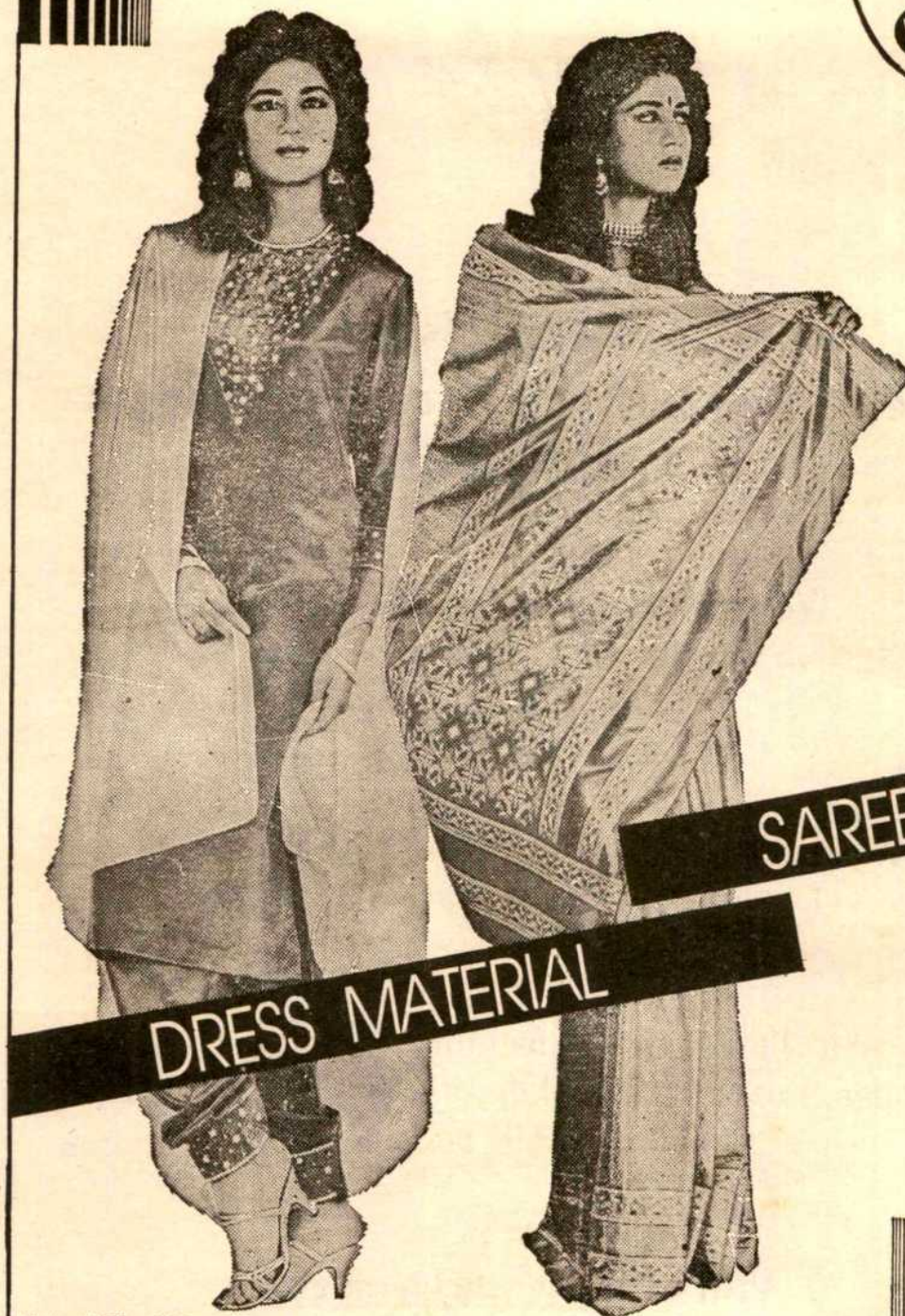
ORIENT
PSPO

The measure which the whole world treasures

Mudra : OF : 111

Sweet Memories

VIMAL
A BURLING HONEY



DRESS MATERIAL

SAREES

Mudra:A:RIL:4243B



HCL Perot Systems
- the Global Software Services provider
from India

We provide World Class Solutions in
System Integration, Business Transformation
and IT Outsourcing

Our industry focus includes Banking and Finance,
Telecommunications, Travel and Airlines

We have a client base in Australia, Germany, Hongkong,
India, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Singapore, Switzerland,
Thailand, UK and USA

Visit us at www.hclperot.com

HCL Perot Systems
A -10 -11, Sector 3, Noida - 201 301, U.P., India
Tel: 91-11-8-4547671-74



A smile. A teardrop. A raised eyebrow.
A flare of the nostrils. A frown. These are
just a few manifestations of a language
that transcends the spoken word.

Spontaneously communicating
feelings like ardour, agony, ecstasy,
excitement, fervour, fright, passion and
pain. All housed in the human body and
triggered by amazing chemical reactions.

Devotion and dedication have enabled a
handful to master the art of self-expression.
Fostering it to perfection. In the visual arts,
the performing arts, music and dance.

At Herdillia, we've also devoted
over two decades perfecting
chemical reactions, thereby elevating
the quality of life. In homes, offices,
industries and in agriculture.

It's our way of expressing underlying
feelings. Like concern and care. Feelings that
are an inherent part of Herdillia's chemistry.

Excitement, anxiety, agony
and ecstasy -
some amazing chemical
reactions we all possess



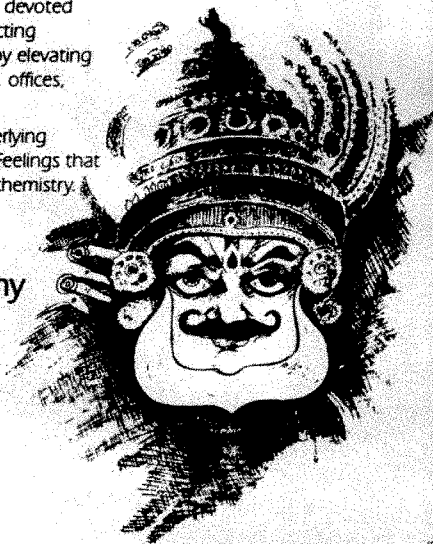
Air India Building,
Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021

Because chemicals are a fact of life

*The ISO 9002 certification covers the facilities for Phenol, Acetone, Phthalic Anhydride,
Diacetone Alcohol, Dodecyl Phenol, Isobutyl Benzene, Diphenyl Oxide and Isophorone.*



042248PCLUE 15



A note from SEMINAR

Dear Subscriber,

We post SEMINAR on the 1st of every month. If your copy does not reach you by the
fifteenth of the month, please inform us immediately so that we can send a replacement.

Complaint of non-receipt of copies at a later date makes it impossible for us to do
anything in the matter.

Circulation Manager
SEMINAR

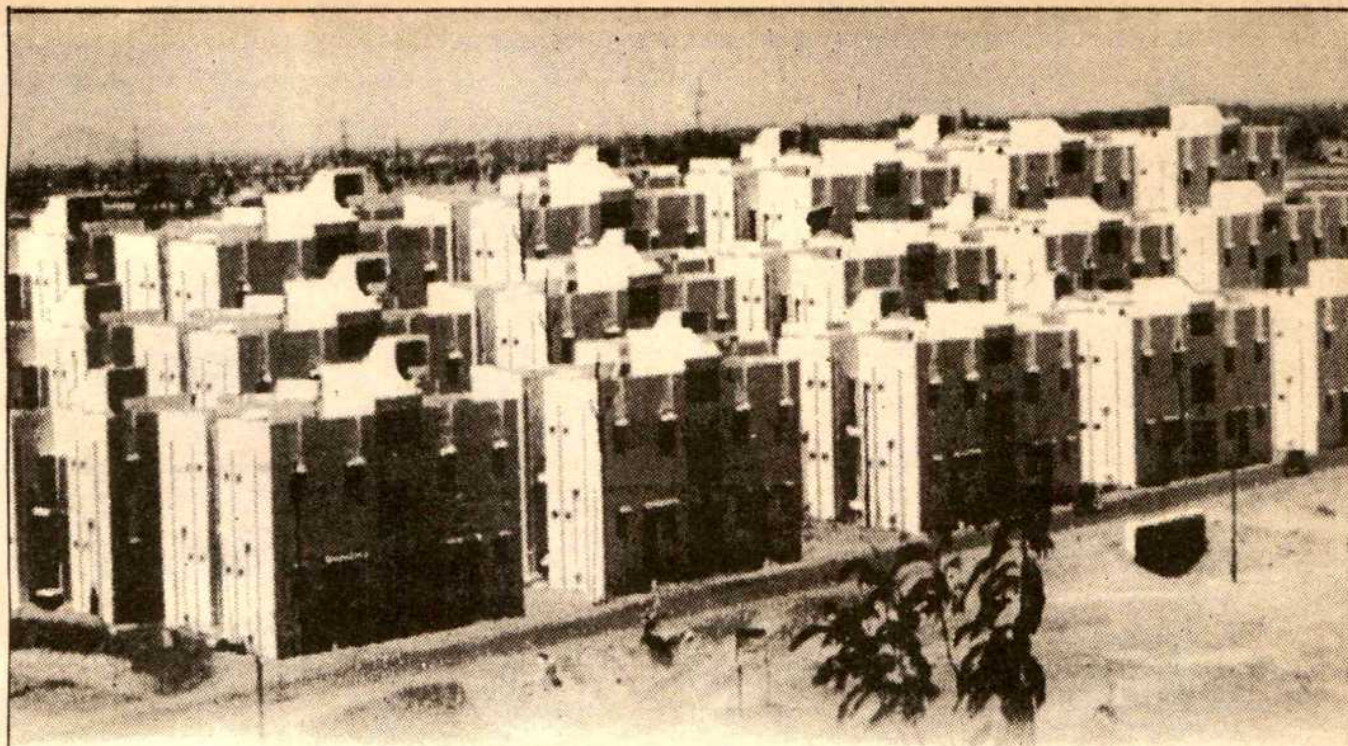
Post Box 338, New Delhi 110001

Tel: 91-011-3316534

Fax: 91-011-3316445

E-mail: seminar@vsnl.com

We are on the Internet now, please direct your browsers to: www.india-seminar.com



A profile of Commitment

The National Housing Bank (NHB) was born of a commitment to fulfil the housing needs of the Nation. Since inception, NHB has been pursuing the objective of developing a sound and efficient housing finance system in the country.

NHB's mission includes establishing and developing the institutional infrastructure through an on going system of supervision and support. The Bank's financing role has had a positive impact on the flow of funds to the housing sector.

Among the important initiatives taken by NHB are the formulation of guidelines for promotion of housing finance companies (HFCs), equity participation in HFCs and building material industries, formulation of a nation-wide loan linked savings scheme Home Loan Account Scheme which caters to all segments of the population. NHB also conducts regular programmes and extends support for training the officials of the HFCs, banks and other financing/development agencies in the sector. The regulatory role of the Bank has helped in building the investor's confidence in the HFCs.

NHB extends financial assistance to a wide range of institutions at the retail level through the refinance mechanism. The Bank also undertakes direct financing of housing projects of public agencies and local bodies.

For ensuring sustained flow of funds into the housing sector, to tackle the housing shortage, NHB seeks to

co-ordinate with the Central and State governments, as joint endeavour for effecting legal reforms. The Bank's initiatives include addressing issues relating to the Stamp, Registration, Rent Control, Urban Land (Ceiling & regulation) Acts etc.

NHB launched the Swarana Jayanti Rural Housing Finance Scheme to mark the fifty years of India's independence.

Under this scheme, NHB extends refinance assistance to various primary lending agencies such as Scheduled Commercial & State Co-operative Banks, Housing Finance Companies, Agriculture & Rural Development Banks, Apex Co-operative Housing Finance Societies and Regional Rural Banks, in respect of the loans extended by them for construction, purchase and improvement or upgradation of houses in freehold land in rural areas.

With flexible and responsive policy measures, the NHB is committed to the growth of the Indian housing sector.



NATIONAL HOUSING BANK
(Wholly owned by the Reserve Bank of India)
Core 5-A, 3rd - 5th floor
India Habitat Centre, Lodi Road,
New Delhi 110 003

498

MARKETS IN MOTION

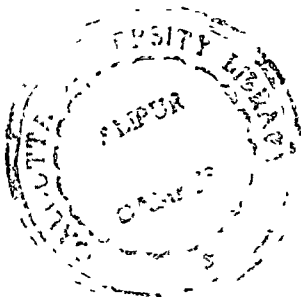
a symposium on

the changing

marketplace

symposium participants

04/5/2001



- 12 **THE PROBLEM**
a short statement
on the issues involved
- 14 **CAN INDIAN BRANDS SURVIVE?**
Rama Bijapurkar, independent strategic marketing
consultant, Mumbai and Visiting Professor
Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
- 18 **SOCIAL MARKETING IN DEVELOPMENT**
Gerson da Cunha, social communicator Mumbai
- 23 **TARGETING NEW CONSUMERS**
Rajiv Inamdar, President ORG-MARG Research and
Monika Chandra, Research Executive, ORG-MARG
Research Mumbai
- 27 **BRANDING INFORMATION.
NEW RAGE OR NEW AGE SCOURGE?**
Dilip Cherian, Consulting Partner, Perfect Relations, and
columnist Delhi
- 31 **CHALLENGE OF CONSUMERISM**
Harish Bijoor, Vice-President, marketing operations
Tata Coffee, Bangalore
- 35 **MEDIA ONSLAUGHT**
Suhel Seth, CEO, Equus Advertising and columnist Delhi
- 38 **CAN MADE IN INDIA BECOME A BRAND?**
Shunu Sen Chairman and CEO, Quadra Advisory,
a strategic marketing consultancy Delhi
- 41 **THE AMUL SAGA**
Verghese Kurien, Chairman, Gujarat Cooperative Milk
Marketing Federation, Anand, Gujarat
- 44 **SEEKING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**
Nandan Maluste, Senior Vice-President,
Kotak Mahindra Capital Mumbai
- 48 **INTERVIEW**
With Alyque Padamsee by Naazneen Karmali,
Executive Editor, 'Business India' Mumbai
- 52 **FURTHER READING**
A short and select bibliography
- 54 **COMMENT**
Received from Prasenjit Maiti, Professor Department of
Political Science, Burdwan University West Bengal
- 59 **COMMUNICATIONS**
Received from Irfan Ahmad, University of Amsterdam
The Netherlands and Himanshu Thakkar,
South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People
(SANDRP), New Delhi
- 64 **BACKPAGE**
COVER
Designed by Akila Seshasayee

The problem

IF Mandal and Masjid were the defining motifs of the last decade, future concern and debate is likely to focus on the market. From the market as the panacea for all our ills to it being the sure route to disaster, the range of positions expressed remain bewilderingly large.

The incorporation of India into the global market following economic reforms has only intensified the debate. For an economy so far governed under the license-permit raj, with the bureaucracy and the political class calling the shots and the average citizen reduced to a supplicant (the *mai-baap* syndrome) the freedom and the uncertainty associated with the spread of the market cannot but appear threatening, more so since the new rules of the game still remain to be defined.

For long, the common perception about our markets has been governed by notions of poverty and scarcity – that a large proportion of our citizens are close to destitute, have low purchasing power, can at best consume the basics, and are thus undemanding about quality of products or services. This is what our enterprises believed, be they in the public or private sector. 'Made in India' was hardly a brand that evoked respect.

The growth of incomes and markets in the last decade has, forever, shattered the perception of a controlled and cocooned existence. The veritable explosion in consumer demand and choice – be it everyday consumer goods or more expensive durable products, in media outlets or telecommunications – and not all, or even most confined to the upper end urban consumer

in metros has come as a shock to many. Even more the radical shifts in lifestyle and consumer behaviour. It is almost as if the Indian, for long starved of worthwhile choices, is exercising pent up frenzy.

It is, however, unclear whether the initial excitement occasioned by the discovery of a large middle class market and the initial set of economic reforms involving deregulation and privatization will last. For one, the reform process, despite heroic pronouncements by the policy planners, has clearly slowed down. And surprisingly, or not so, the opposition to both the pace and content of reforms has come not from the public, but from precisely the same business class which had earlier complained about being hemmed in by restrictive rules and regulations. Clearly the skill and the confidence of being able to fend for themselves in a more open and competitive market has still to evolve.

Witness the cries for protection, complaints about unfair competition from foreign players, about the absence of a level playing field. Be it the members of the Bombay club, small scale manufacturers of toys and bicycle parts, or employees of public and private sector service providers – the call is uniform, *swadeshi*.

There is little doubt that India as a business destination, not just for foreign players but native entrepreneurs, is not hugely attractive. Still too many rules and regulations, too many clearances needed and too dilatory an adjudicatory process in the event of conflicts. Operating in an open and competitive market

demands speedy decision-making, which is clearly difficult in our environment

As, if not more, important has been our inability, barring rare exceptions, of evolving a culture of business suited to the altered circumstances. Customer satisfaction and shareholder value are still unfamiliar concepts to our business class. These demand high product quality, service, predictability and reliability – all key concerns of a discerning consumer. Earlier, the consumer had little choice. No longer so.

Equally important is for our businessmen to move out from the mindset of the home market and think global. To not just protect/expand one's share in the domestic market but be in a position to compete overseas. All this demands a better knowledge of the operating conditions in foreign lands – from customer preferences to rules and regulations governing technology, labour conditions, ethical practices, and so on.

None of this is going to come easily, particularly for a class not famous for its investments in R&D and innovation. And without acquiring a new business model and culture, many of our firms will go down. We must remember that competition provides little space for the loser.

Central to the success of those of our firms which have made good – be they in products or services – has been an ability to create a brand value. And this has come not just from investing in advertising and marketing, though that definitely helps, but by investing

their brand with value. Amul is a good example of success. Maruti or Bajaj, which led their respective segments for years, are today feeling the heat because they got complacent.

Is this shift to a consumerist market and culture with constant global comparisons good for a country still relatively poor and marked by huge inequalities – region, class, caste and gender? Is it that we are sacrificing social goals in pandering to the whims of those with the requisite purchasing power? What would be the long-term implications of converting every activity – be it education, health, culture or politics and social movements – into a marketable commodity? The recent brouhaha over the marketing of the Mahakumbh as a spiritual destination raises all these and other questions, all troubling.

Few of us today are sensitive to, even aware of, the wider implications of the shift to a market friendly dispensation. We could try, as many indeed advocate, to reverse the trend towards privatization, globalization and treating the 'customer as king'. That possibly would be a tragedy. A more creative response would be to re-tool ourselves to become proficient at the new rules of the game.

This issue of *Seminar* brings together a spectrum of views, not from theoreticians but practitioners of the new culture of the market. Hopefully the day is not far off when we can point to the 'Made in India' brand with pride.

Can Indian brands survive?

RAMA BIJAPURKAR

AFTER having read several press reports and articles about the second Chinese invasion of India, and discussions on whether it was unfair dumping or fair competitive advantage, I finally made a trip to Manish market, the bazaar in Bombay that sells all manner of imported goods. What I saw blew my mind. Attractive watches for Rs 150. I took one home for my snooty upper class teenager and it passed muster. Wonderful toy cars at one-third the price. I took one for a little boy whose mother works in the building as a maid, and his eyes lit up. It was large sized, looked great and, what's more, it was new – not a battered cast-off that had seen better days.

There were all kinds of powerful torch lights which could illuminate a whole room, and at those prices, it was a sensible investment to buy one per room, rather than hunt whenever the lights went off for the single one we owned! And the textiles were very desirable, both in terms of price and quality (for those who like glitzy high shine stuff). I had bought imported cordless headphones for my TV set for Rs 1750 four years ago, they were now available at Rs 450. The low income but upwardly mobile peon from my office said that the first bits of crockery his household acquired were from here, and he knew where to get his first tape recorder when he could afford it.

I came home and, with wonder in my eyes, recounted my shopping tales to my friend who said, 'Surely you know that Chinese products don't last beyond six months.' I chewed over this piece of information. If he were right, then the paranoia that all of us felt was quite needless. No consumer, especially the value-conscious Indian consumer, would fall for any of this. After all, we are not a disposable culture and as a frustrated marketer once commented, 'The last thing that the Indians threw out was the British.' But if the product does last, then why should the consumer not choose that which is better and cheaper? If there is a fan available with a built-in inverter at almost the same price, why 'be Indian, buy Indian' and suffer when the power goes off on a midsummer afternoon?

A recent *India Today* article on the subject ('Enter the Dragon'), got to the crux of the matter. It said that the difficult choice before the government was whom to protect – the Indian manufacturer or the Indian consumer. My position on this is absolutely unambiguous. He who pays the piper must be allowed to call the tune. The consumer is shelling out his hard-earned, scarce money and must be allowed to get the best bang for his buck. The conceptual construct of 'bang for the buck' is 'customer perceived value' from any goods or service, where value is defined as benefit minus cost ($V = B - C$), where cost is not just the price but the total cost of usage.

So, can Indian brands survive? Only if they deliver a value advantage over the new brands entering the country, either in terms of superior benefit (from the product features or services added on), or better costs or some combination of better or worse benefit and/or cost that makes the arithmetic work in their favour. Is this a likely

scenario? My guess is that only a handful of Indian brands will win the customer value battle. In the rest of this article, I want to address two issues – how Indian consumers process value, and what it takes for Indian brands to have a value advantage and, therefore, survive in the future.

How do customers choose what they want? The broad framework of customer value processing is that customers view any product or service as a composite of two kinds of variables – benefits that add value and costs that diminish value, cost being not just the price tag but all the economic, rational and emotional costs that have to be paid to acquire these benefits. The total value that they perceive from any offer is the net of the value gained from each of these benefits and the value lost as a result of each cost. They examine all the options available to them and process the value they derive from each, and then choose the one that offers the maximum value, i.e. where the 'benefit minus cost' is the highest.

The magnitude of value gained or lost from each benefit/cost depends on the 'value system' that customers have, i.e. how much importance they attach to each benefit/cost. Different consumers have different 'value systems', i.e. what they attach a greater or lesser value to is different for the rich and poor, young and old, city and small town. Having come to a value judgment for all available options, they then choose the one that delivers the maximum net value.

Can an illiterate, poor consumer base really process value? I have trouble dealing with the notion that some ideologues have that poor illiterate consumers cannot process value and are beguiled into buying products that do not deliver value. All consumers, no matter how illiterate, consistently demonstrate that they are capable of

processing value. You just need to listen to them do so – they do it in every facet of their lives. Girls are less valuable than boys (lifetime benefit minus lifetime cost), paying off the local *goonda* has more value than running after the police, and so on. Surely the same consumer base which threw out Indira Gandhi in 1977, when her benefit-cost arithmetic worked out worse than other options, is capable of evaluating bicycles and detergents!

I also have trouble dealing with arguments that say that poor consumers must have a consumption value system that attaches less value to the good things of life – aesthetics, convenience and so on. Television has been blamed for changing 'solid Indian' consumption values. My first response to this is that surely the consumer has the right to decide how he wants to spend his own money – what constitutes consumption prudence and what doesn't.

The fact is that in the previous era of no options, several things that people valued were not available. Consequently, it was easy for manufacturers to believe that the consumer did not want them. For example, a lack of aesthetics and finish perfection, be it in watches or tractors or two wheelers, has always bothered consumers. But in an economy where suppliers did not have the word 'customer value' in their business lexicon, the aesthetically nice option always came with a higher price tag or a trade-off in durability, and the customer decided he didn't want it.

But he will jump at any option that does not require him to make such trade-offs. And that is precisely the nature of the threat from overseas. Not only does it have additional functionality to make it work better, it looks and feels better and what's more, it doesn't cost more. In some cases it

even costs less! What would any half intelligent consumer say? 'Hey, is this what I was being cheated of earlier? Let's switch, and raise our expectations to what they should have been'

Look at the 'value maturity' the Indian consumer base demonstrated which brought seasoned multinationals to their knees. When the first wave of big name multinational brands came into the country, post 1991, they were value arrogant. They did not believe that their offering would not be received joyfully by an 'underdeveloped, starved for international quality' marketplace. They were proved wrong (leading to the debate about whether the middle class actually exists or not!)

The 'starved for goodies' Indian consumer has been less than enthusiastic about international brands of Scotch, luxury cars, breakfast cereals, American colas, jeans, cosmetics and sun glasses. Top of the line Japanese television brands did not get the same response as did the Korean. The Korean refrigerators, television and cars are winning against Indian brands. Why? Better quality products at comparable prices. The benefit-cost equation gives them a value advantage.

Star TV did not have much success to begin with. Its irrelevance to most of the market with its English bouquet of programmes was a problem. Zee understood the pulse of the consumer better. Its benefit minus cost equation was far better than Doordashan, wherever consumers had a choice. Today, Zee's value delivered is perceived by consumers to be less than that of a revamped Star Plus. Consumers have gravitated to where they see better value.

Why didn't breakfast cereals take the Indian market by storm, even though they were launched by an inter-

national blue blooded brand, were truly world class in quality, and provided all the nutrition and health benefits along with convenience added to boot? Because the nutrition and health benefits were not demonstrably more than a fat free, cereal based, steamed idli, and the cost per family for a full stomach was a lot more. And to pay that much more for convenience alone didn't gel with consumers.

When Kinetic Honda, the first new generation scooter, was introduced into the Indian market several years ago, it was given a cold reception by customers despite having obviously superior features to good old Bajaj. Research showed that it would not be the first choice of customers even if it were priced at par with Bajaj. Consumers perceived the modern features of Kinetic Honda, not as benefits but potential problems. For example, even the electric start instead of the kick start was seen to be a mixed blessing – consumers believed, based on their dismal experience thus far, that anything electric was usually unreliable, and for such a vital application as starting the scooter, safe was better than sorry.

However, times have changed, consumers have got more experienced, and have rejected the scooter product itself in favour of the motorcycle. Hero Honda looks better, is a motorcycle, works better on rural roads, gives great mileage and is, benefit minus cost equation wise, clearly offering a value advantage. Kinetic Honda, on the other hand, has found its niche as an urban, woman-friendly vehicle, easy to manoeuvre and drive, and to this set of consumers, is clearly at a value advantage compared to the motorcycle.

Who is the arbiter of value? For those who protest that Indian brands and options are not as value negative

as they are made out to be, I would like to say. But have you asked the customer? It is his money after all and he should be the judge. I was recently at a conference organised by a premier industry association where the issue of 100% FDI in retailing was being discussed. Nowhere in any of the impassioned speeches did I hear the word 'customer'. When I did dare to speak and suggest that after having had shoddy service from retailers for a long time, the consumer deserved better value for his money, there was a huge outcry of denial. Nobody in the audience had seen a customer satisfaction survey nor attended a focus group.

Some consumer feedback. 'If you go into XYZ (name of a large Indian department store) and ask to read the manuals of four different brands of washing machines in order to understand your choices better, he tells you that the manuals come in the packed boxes and you cannot do that.' 'I got a defective brand new refrigerator and it took two weeks and a lot of begging before anyone from the company or dealer came to look at it and another two weeks before they repaired it. They refused to replace it with a new piece.' I am sure every one of us has our own share of 'wai stories' to contribute.

Let's now look at Indian brands that are blockbuster successes. All of them are clearly winners in the value sweepstakes, arising from a superior understanding of what drives consumer value. Nirma is the epitome of this, and the pioneer of what is now acknowledged as the best way to win in the Indian market – the 'low cost business model'. It created a detergent market 10 times larger than that of the most marketing savvy multinational in India – Hindustan Lever. It provided adequate quality at affordable prices, *the genius being in innovatively cre-*

ating an entire business system that was low cost. Nirma is clearly the pioneer of the high volume, low margin, low cost business system which is perfect for unlocking the potential of the Indian market, profitably – a formula most MNCs just don't 'get'.

The fact is that the bulk of India's consumer base is poor, and the market is defined by a whole lot of people consuming a little bit at low prices rather than a few people consuming a lot at high prices. Will Nirma survive? I'd place my bets on the brand. Understanding how rising incomes and exposure of their traditional consumers changes their value systems, the promoters are proactively upgrading their offer. The low cost business system which was earlier low cost-low sophistication-low tech, is now being given more muscle with backward integration rather than cheap labour driven cost advantages.

Over 70% of the Indian consumer base has remained unpenetrated thus far in most categories. Poor consumers want their children to have toys, their huts to be neatly painted, they long for a telephone and a TV, some form of personal transport and so on. If you have the stomach for it, there is a high pain, high gain opportunity to unlock the potential of the huge base of low income consumers, who have the exposure and aspirations to consume but low purchasing power.

The answer lies in using innovation in product and business systems to deliver price-performance that both sells and makes a profit. Quite simply, we know that there is a Nirma in every market waiting to be created, whether in video players or e-mail, household painting or farm mechanisation or personal transportation. Successful companies in India have already done this, Hindustan Lever calls it the 'popular' business model, designed to serve the

'belly of the market'. Citibank is testing Suvridha, a low price, high service, low cost model with success. The Subhiksha model, the innovative 'popular segment' retail offering in the South, is gaining steadily despite being contrary to western retailing formats.

Indian brands that understand and adopt this way of doing business are well protected because of their real cost and capability advantages. This is the true source of delivering value advantage, on a large scale, and profitably. Unfortunately the Chinese have a far better inherent cost structure to play this game. So one more 'essential' for survival needs to be better distribution and retailer service, and an inherently better understanding of Indian consumer needs. Surely understanding Indian consumer needs is something that the Chinese cannot be better at than Indian brand owners?

The small scale sector still has a large share of many consumer markets – biscuits, tea, oil, confectionery – to name just a few. Unfortunately, while they are low cost players, they are also low customer value players. Every poor man needs to be able to give his child clean and hygienically produced, wrapped and hence fly-free biscuits and sweets, without having to pay more for them. Small regional Indian brands have a stronger chance of survival since they are focused on catering to the specific needs of an ethnic group – hard to beat by anyone with more national aspirations.

Indian brands which believe in the 'premium' business model, i.e. that only those consumers who can pay high prices deserve to be counted as consumers, are very vulnerable today because the fact is that a lot of so called premium Indian brands do not deliver benefits that are 'premium' enough for the prices they charge.

Even if they do, their consumers have the 'money for value' mindset, and would rather pay more for more rather than pay less for less.

It's the $V=B-C$ arithmetic again. A greater B and a greater C can still give a greater V than a smaller B and a smaller C! They have got away with it thus far, in the absence of competition. But where there is competition, especially hardened battle-scarred competition from overseas, they have started collapsing, as has been the experience in the consumer durable sector.

Service brands have the best hope of survival – as C K Prahalad pointed out in a recent speech, it takes a genius to be able to replicate the *dabbawalla* system of Bombay – world-class and more quality delivered with a modestly educated workforce and cost to consumer of just Rs 250 per month! As he says, if you marry the *dabbawalla* and the *angadia* with the Internet, you can create a strong rival to Fedex!

In conclusion, size of brands or heritage or history is no protection for Indian brands. Even huge brands can collapse overnight if better value products enter the Indian market (nine million bicycles certainly at risk here, as will be makers of small household durables), especially if the brands have been value ill-treating consumers.

There is a short time window for Indian brands to revamp their entire consumer value equation and work at a business system to profitably deliver that value. In the meanwhile, in many sectors, perhaps hugely raising the bar on consumer service will keep invaders from gaining quick inroads into the market. How many Indian companies are ready to make a big financial investment to do this? I would bet carefully on this one!

Social marketing in development

GERSON DA CUNHA

'SOCIAL changers' and commercial marketers agree only exceptionally. But this they would both accept without demur. Development is a great and desirable stimulant of national markets. A few points of growth in incomes or heightened human aspirations in rural markets, and the big boys react – the heavy marketers as well as the development folk. India's markets grow in importance to the country, naturally, but globally as well. (One even hears whispers that the world crowns that our Miss Indias keep winning, honour not just the loveliness of our ladies but the size of our cosmetics market as well, pure malice of course.)

So one would imagine that all things benefiting development would be devoutly supported by its proponents. And of these, successful strategies born in the hurly-burly of

commerce would surely be accepted instantly into the heart of development planning. Strangely this does not happen, even with something as self-evident as social marketing. This is deserving of some reflection. It is also something that must change.

Development programmes are often irritating given the closed minds of their planners. Such persons will often simply shut out concepts they have not evolved themselves, or those from other fields, however relevant. So public health work is imperially led by epidemiologists, though the projects themselves are behavioural in substance, being about change in attitude and practice. Social psychologists and pedagogues reign in literacy programmes, though the task usually has much to do with economics and, once again, with people needing to adopt new practices.

One would have thought that programme planners would sift and seek relevant models for helpful principles and strategies. But, no. All too often will a water and sanitation project, or action for better maternal and child health, start at square one, even with a certain arrogance in their modesty ('We are starting from basics!' 'We will learn as we go!'). It is as if nothing had been tried before in the field, or there was nowhere else from which anything is to be learned. Which of course is nonsense.

Reproductive Child Health (RCH) programmes – once, family planning – have dropped the 'target-based' approach. There has been a 'paradigm shift'. But in these polysyllables rooted in Greek, and perhaps still hovering in that language for some, lies the need for straightforward demand creation. For that, the required ideas and strategies must surely come from commerce, not the medical sciences. It is intriguing that here, as in similar fields, marketing methods do not beat at the heart of development programme planning.

In practice, development and marketing are both about modifying group behaviour – the one in a community, the other in a market. In either case, the quarry is an elusive target. Both must deal with resistance to change and competition for attention and/or clientele. Both need clear, strong distribution channels for ideas and products. Both require a price to be paid by those benefited or canvassed. Both seek long-term adoption of what they offer. Profit is the goal – social in the one case, commercial in the other.

Small wonder that marketing concepts and methods have worked well in social programmes when properly used. The wonder is that they are not routinely applied, at least not in the so-called Third World, where the

issues are life and death, the scale is vast and, therefore, the need for the best tools crucial. Social change and marketing are of course different, as we shall see. But the similarities are sufficiently striking for the term 'social marketing' to be defensible.

It is extraordinary how much resistance is stirred up when the term is so much as uttered in the same breath as action in the hallowed fields of human rights, or HIV/AIDS prevention and control, or indeed development initiatives in general. 'You can't sell development like a certain dark cola' is the cry. But you can, when you use the concepts and methods correctly. It works. Resistance is now beginning to be seen for what it is, sheer bias and therefore to be dismissed. Development, particularly in our part of the globe, is too important to become a victim of ignorance in this key area of attitudinal and behavioural change.

We might need to recognise here the different meanings given to the term social marketing in different circles. For some it is the sale, at discounted rates, of contraceptives for men or women, or of oral rehydrates. The present commentary derives the term from the definition of marketing. It then develops a brief discussion of six concepts conventionally covered by the term and the way they apply to social interventions.

Definitions are best avoided but explanations are sometimes essential, if only for the sake of good order. Marketing then, may be seen to be a process that identifies an unmet consumer need and satisfies it at a profit. Typically, it involves commercial products and services, possessing brand identities amid competition. The classic considerations of marketing are consumer, product, competition, price, promotion and distribution. It is

'a neutral methodology, and social marketing is its adaptation to social imperatives' (Manoff 1987, *Social Marketing*, p. 7).

Consumer Marketing begins and ends not, as you would imagine, with profit but with the consumer – on whom in fact profit turns, if s/he is creatively addressed by the product and promotion. Therefore, much study of the potential consumer: his/her needs, perceptions, demographics and exposure to communication precedes any marketing decision. Not so in social change. Here, what the project wants the citizen to know/do/believe is primary and the starting point. The marketing stance is humbler. It does not ask questions already sure of the answers ('Nutrition problems? Let's tell them about the balanced diet...'). This is its people-centred characteristic, hence its social relevance.

Product. Creating new consumer behaviour, the heart of marketing, leads at once to consideration of the product. In development projects, individuals/communities need appealing 'products' to adopt, not a set of instructions and ominous warnings. People buy benefit. A creative concoction of facts is necessary, of the kind that transfigures lumps of sodium stearate into desired tablets of soap, milled, perfumed, pastel-hued. Thus, target groups in family welfare must be sold not the 'small family norm' but the better health smaller families enjoy. The idea of such health must be crafted from elements valued by target families, then used to package a desired practice.

In growth monitoring of infants and its promotion, the product to be marketed cannot be baby's growth chart, or the scales, as happens so often. It could only be 'healthy growth', something momentous for mothers. Such considerations are important.

because the perceived benefit of a product (say, a particular practice) must always be greater than perceived 'cost'

Price/cost In the marketplace, price is obviously the money transacted. In development, it is an element of sacrifice: the extra time and/or new effort involved in a new behaviour, or the peer group disapproval that the innovator must endure. Many practices thought to be beneficial or free are not in fact so, and are 'costly'

Breastmilk does not come free. A mother pays a performance price in many different ways, from dealing with sore nipples and often a disgruntled husband, to coping with deep-seated feelings of inadequacy, subsequently transferred to her perception of the quality of her breastmilk. Many communities prefer the 'sweet' water of the old contaminated pond ('better for cooking') to the 'salty' water of the handpump. Unless the 'social cost' of new behaviour is recognized, not enough will go into enhancing the value and appeal of the breast-feeding practice, or the value of safe water from the handpump.

Communication and promotion. Indispensable to creating demand and adding value to a brand, advertising is commercial mass persuasion. The advertising plan identifies who shall be addressed, with what messages, through which channels, to what purpose. Advertising is the centrepiece of promotion in marketing. Properly handled it can make an enormous difference in development programmes because it is a prime instrument of persuasion, indispensable to the behaviour change action that most of them demand.

Distribution Frequently neglected in social programmes, but always planned by the social marketer, is distribution. In health or fam-

ily welfare, clinics are the distribution outlets of products, which may be three-dimensional, or messages. Neglecting them, or allowing staff to stay untrained, or routinely absent, is as absurd as manufacturing a product, advertising it and then allowing the shops to go unstocked. Yet this is the constant reality.

Competition Competition is regularly and fatally disregarded in the behavioural change transaction. It is always present as the other options available to, say, the housewife whom we would like to see at the immunization post. She may succumb instead to competing domestic demands or, strongest of all, the inertia of past (non) practice. Such competition adds to performance cost. Its power emphasizes anew the importance of enhancing the competitive 'product appeal' of the practices we are promoting.

This sort of thinking is a world away from the philosophies and methods animating conventional programmes for social and development change. In this sphere of harsh reality, a peculiar unreality prevails. For instance, and to exaggerate only slightly, change in health practices is considered the inevitable consequence of just planting a health service in the community. When the intervention grows a mite more sophisticated, new behaviour is seen to be a function of community 'awareness' or appropriate 'education'. These beliefs contain lethal doses of half-truths. They are the equivalent of a marketer believing that a good product merely needs to be stocked in a shop to sell itself profitably, or that advertising of the brand is all that really deserves attention, never mind making a good product and distributing it well.

One of the most tragic of spectacles in social intervention is waste, especially when it is avoidable and

indulged in all honesty. An example would be any programme that uses all communication channels to say everything to everybody. When this happens, it is evidence, not just of extravagance but of poor target group identification. It is second nature in a marketing person to ask and establish whose behaviour(s) must change, how, and to what end. In the absence of this framework, other sins get committed. There is nothing, for instance, to prevent irrational stop-go activities, which may suddenly stop for good, well before enough benefit has been won.

In marketing, message crafting is of fundamental importance. It is ill-considered in programmes for social change. Worse, there is never a shortage of expertise on technically correct content. Experts will often insist on transmitting a whole filigree of related messages. And so one gets that hopeless dispersal of message, the 12 or 25 health points triumphantly broadcast as 30-second radio spots over three months. Consider the confusion, the cost of adequate repetition and, ultimately, of acceptance. This is the illusion of communications, something that marketing thinking automatically avoids.

The key point to note here is that marketing is an interlinked set of concepts and methods that the marketer instinctively activates, addressing them logically and without exception in a settled process. It is a process that has emerged from an unforgiving school.

Errors in marketing show up unmistakably as declining market share, unmet targets, financial loss. All very visible and verifiable. The marketplace is a Roman circus teaching unforgettable lessons. Theory, shoddy thinking and planning, false theories, and irrelevancies get put to the sword of profit and loss. This is how the

experimental and empirical framework of marketing experience toughens and evolves

It is different in the fields of social intervention. The resident culture here is pioneering and seen as investment in change. It is gentle with failure. Hence error is often compounded, not checked. Here is an area of no bottom lines, lacking proper indicators. Here also is the crying need for robust conceptual maps and sure routes that can guide one past waste and make good any lack of experience.

Social marketing could provide such guidance and certainly an operational framework. It is quintessentially a methodology that responds to human need and desires. There is even a certain illogicality in rejecting the marketing model as a resource. When we do so, we sweep aside something born in the exacting and costly wedlock of science and the marketplace. We reach instead for a novice-crafted tool, which often starts being fashioned when a project gets underway! Social marketing could provide at least as effective a checklist as medicine or social anthropology, those hallowed disciplines of development.

We may be staring here at a signpost on the way to a holistic model for addressing attitude and behavioural change. Such a model when finished would save time, resources and opportunity. It would also obviate the decision making by whim or irrelevant discipline, e.g., paediatricians making technical decisions on target groups, message and media.

Of course, this is no magic wand. It is in fact far more complex and exacting than commercial marketing, and therefore liable to more frequent failure. By definition, it proposes new and demanding behaviour, often flying in the frowning face of culture or tradition. There is rarely any satisfac-

tion delivered to imprint a practice and make it behaviour. Better hygiene does not instantly reward one, like headache pills or fizzy drinks do. To be successful, social marketing must win greater battles. It cannot be satisfied with the 5 or 10 per cent shifts in market share that are the triumphs of the consumer goods field. Social marketing must aim at 100 per cent conversion to its propositions.

Greater the reason then for development programmes to employ validated methodologies. If nothing else, they provide social action with a simple checklist for analysis and planning that ensures greater rigour of method and thought. Implementing the approach obviates the downside of ad-hocism and bright ideas that so often masquerade as strategy. In a way, it is little wonder they are so little used in development!

It is not as if social marketing is a universal dead letter. In India and abroad, the concepts and methodologies have been used, if not comprehensively and for adequate time then at least to initiate and frame.

Good instances are the National Technology Missions in India, featured on the development scene a decade ago. They comprised telecommunications, literacy, immunisation, drinking water and oilseeds. All of them, except perhaps telecom which had major technical and hardware components, had much to do with people and their behaviour. For instance, a mother had to take her infant for five immunisation shots when she had done nothing like it ever before. Adults had to make time in tired, crowded lives for literacy classes, usually at night. Communities were required to change drinking habits, shifting from the 'sweet' but polluted waters of the local pond to the 'salty' but safer product of the new handpump, which they had also

to maintain in good repair. The Indian public, especially in north India and Gujarat, had to be made aware of the enormous amounts of cooking oil it consumes and the need to cut down for health reasons.

As if this were not enough, there was the daunting task of fostering changes in attitude and practice among concerned government cadres, e.g., the public health engineering departments in water supply, the health departments to maintain cold chains in immunisation programmes, the huge but inactive operatives of state education departments and the state mechanisms concerned with bringing more land under oilseeds, growing the right strains, extracting more oil and containing price speculation – to say nothing of the need to do all this at central level and in the states. Somehow, it all got done, in some places better than in others.

After argument and haranguing, three advertising agencies were actually appointed to help. Memorable programmes were evolved to promote immunisation, safe drinking water and literacy – these after quite straightforward application of the classic methodologies outlined in earlier paragraphs.

The results were dramatic, not of course exclusively the outcome of proper marketing, but this had something to do with the drama. In a few short years, polio came close to being wiped out in some states and immunisation levels sprang in eastern UP and north Bihar from percentages in their teens to 80% and 85% of children in the target age groups. In three years, 160,000 'problem' villages received at least one source of safe drinking water. The communication programme for literacy worked so well that a 30-second echo of it still runs, now some ten years later on Doordarshan.

But the bad news is that these advances were taken nowhere after Sam Pitroda, head of the missions, was driven out by elements of the VP Singh government and his wonderful crop of mission directors got transferred in the normal course. Some recent projects to promote lower fertility and contraceptive adoption are beginning to look at this tool anew, though not all of them see that you either install the whole engine or get left with a stalled shell.

In quite another part of the forest, in Brazil, UNICEF and the ministry of health collaborated in what became a model programme to promote breast-feeding, the lessons of which became widespread in application. Here again the framework and

checklist of social marketing helped analyse, plan for and then stop the catastrophic decline in breast-feeding practices in key Brazilian cities and actually to reverse the trend. Six vital target groups were addressed by a mix of marketing methods matched to group and purpose. Figure 1 below illustrates the complexity and spread of the action.

The Indonesian Nutrition Education and Behaviour Change Project yielded good results, if on small scale. Using volunteer health workers, specially designed training materials, focus group research and mass media, the project showed improvement in the nutrition status of target children through the use of communication/education alone. There was no feed-

ing component. Domestically available foodstuffs were made full use of, and the communication/education cost was kept low.

In Egypt, a diarrhoea management social marketing programme used mass media systematically for the first time. This alone increased the use of oral rehydration salts from one per cent to nearly 70 per cent of diarrhoeal episodes in the researched region, in less than two years time.

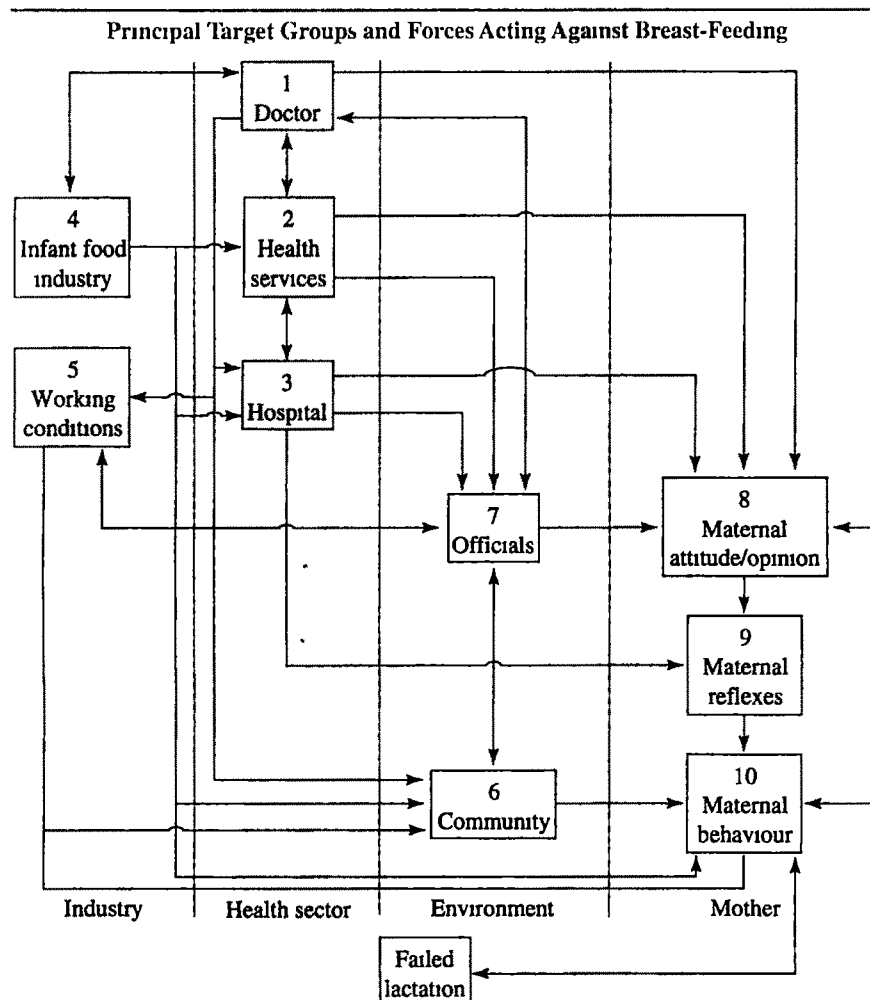
In Colombia and Turkey, the action to immunize children acquired national momentum, attracting resources from the armed forces and religious establishments, increasing coverage many times over.

There are those who regard social marketing as the devil's own work, at best something ignoble. It is supposed to cause a 'vertical' imposition of ideas evolved with no consultation of the community. Or, it operates at an unfair 'subliminal' level.

The 'subliminal' fabrication has been debunked too firmly to be taken seriously. As for the rest, clearly the messenger is being mistaken for the message. Because marketing transacts mostly in products and services considered trivial, the process becomes coloured in some eyes with the same candy stripes. But it is social marketing that places the individual and the community at the centre of its world. It is more observant of local culture and individual perception than the process often passing for 'education' and certainly than conventional medical prescription and direction.

On its heart are carved two fairly simple thoughts. The individual must have the freedom to choose. The community has common sense, it must be allowed to decide. Marketing, for all the suspicions it arouses in purist hearts, is the best server of those propositions.

FIGURE 1



Source: Gerson da Cunha, UNICEF Brasília

Targeting new consumers

RAJIV INAMDAR and MONIKA CHANDRA

MARKETERS in India have traditionally focused their attention and marketing effort on the higher socioeconomic classes (otherwise called SECA&B). Both they and their advertising agencies have found these segments easier to understand and identify with. It has been believed that they are more easily targeted through the traditional mass media. The language and tone of voice used to communicate with this segment has a more familiar and comfortable ring to it.

This article examines the changes in the demographic profile, media habits and penetration of certain products, and suggests that it is now perhaps time to examine the relevance of mid and low socioeconomic classes (SEC C, D&E) who, over the last decade, have slowly but surely grown in economic power and today contribute significant volumes to a number of product categories.

The socioeconomic classification (SEC) groups urban Indian households on the basis of education and occupation of the chief wage earner (CWE – the person who contributes the most to the household expenses) of the household into five segments (SEC A, SEC B, SEC C, SEC D and SEC E households in that order). This classification is more stable than one based on income alone and being reflective of lifestyle is more relevant to the examination of consumption behaviour. In this article 'high' socioeconomic classes refers to SEC A&B, 'mid' socioeconomic class refers to SEC C and 'low' socioeconomic classes refers to SEC D&E. Data sourced from Indian Readership Survey (¹ IRS 1998-1999) gives the education and

occupation profile of the chief wage earner of households.

The CWEs of nearly half the SECA households work in executive positions. The other half comprises mainly of industrialist/businessmen or shop owners. Almost all of them are either graduates or post graduates. CWEs of SEC B households are primarily employed at clerical or supervisory levels (46%). 29% are shopkeepers while 10% are industrialist/businessmen. Less than half are graduates or post graduates (45%). 38% are educated till the 10th or 12th grade, while 13% have had some college education (¹ IRS 1998-1999 refers to IRS round, July 98-May 99).

The mid socioeconomic class (SEC C) comprises households whose CWEs are employed at clerical or supervisory levels (37%), skilled workers (33%), petty traders (12%) or shop owners (18%). Three quarters of them are educated till the 10th or 12th grade while the rest have attended school till a maximum of the 9th grade. Less than half the CWEs of households belonging to the low socioeconomic classes (SEC D&E) are unskilled workers. About 28% are skilled workers while 18% are petty traders. 45% have attended school till a maximum of the 9th grade and 31% are illiterate.

Table 1 shows the socioeconomic classification of urban Indian households. The high socioeconomic classes, i.e. SECA&B, constitute over a quarter of the urban Indian population. The mid economic class, SEC C constitutes 21% of the population while the lower two SECs account for over half the population.

We examined the changes in average monthly household income (MHI) across different socioeco-

TABLE 1

Socio-Economic Classes		
	(1990-91)	(1998-99)
Projected Base (in 000s) All Urban Households	38834	49174
	%	%
SECA	10	10
SECB	17	18
SECC	20	21
SECD&E	53	51

Source NRS IV (1990-91) & IRS* (1998-99)

economic classes using the socio-economic classification

According to data sourced from the National Readership Survey IV (NRS IV 1990-1991) and Indian Readership Survey (IRS 1998-1999), urban households have increased their average monthly household income (MHI) by 2.1 to 2.3 times between 1990 and 1999. The increase in average MHI has been higher in the low socioeconomic classes (SEC D&E which account for over 50% of the urban households), i.e. about 14 percentage points more than the percentage increase in average MHI of the higher socioeconomic classes (SEC A&B) as shown in Table 2. This suggests that improvement in the standard of living has not benefited only the 'haves'

The per capita private final consumption expenditure (per capita PFCE at 1993-94 prices surrogate for consumption expenditure) went up by 18% between the years 1993-94 and 1997-98 according to the 1999 issue of the *National Accounts Statistics*

TABLE 2

Percentage Increase in Average MHI between 1990 and 1999	
Socio-economic class	% increase in avg MHI
SECA	113
SECB	113
SECC	117
SECD & E	127

Source NRS IV (1990-91) & IRS* (1998-99)

Therefore, not only income but consumption expenditure as well has shown an increase. However, per capita PFCE data is available only at an aggregate level for both urban and rural India together. Since we expect consumption expenditure to be increasing at a faster rate for urban vis-a-vis rural consumers, this aggregate figure indicates that urban consumption expenditure has increased by at least 18%.

The last 10 years have therefore brought about an increase in the income of the urban Indian consumer, a change witnessed across socioeconomic classes, but much more so in the lower socioeconomic classes.

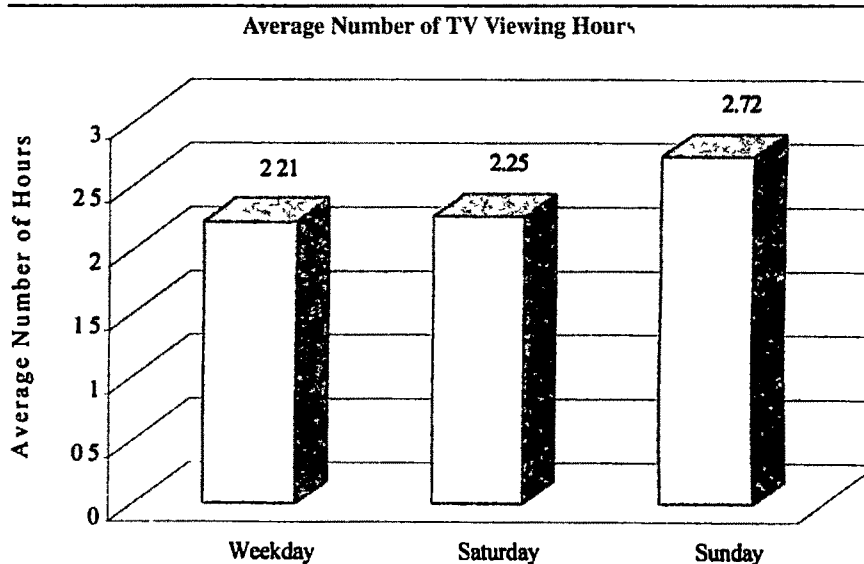
The most significant change, in media consumption, in the last decade has been an increase in the importance of television in the lives of the Indian consumer. Currently 66% of the adult (15+) urban population watches television all seven days a week vis-a-vis just 40% 10 years ago. On a weekday, the average viewer watches television for around two and a quarter hours. Television could slowly replace social interaction in all its traditional roles of opinion maker, informer, entertainer and influencer.

There has been some change in television's viewership (percentage of people watching television in an average week) base in the last 10 years. However, the real change is the increase in the frequency with which viewers watch television. Television seems to have moved on from being entertainment to being indulged in on holidays to being part of the consumer's daily routine.

There has been a 26 percentage point increase in the people watching television every day as illustrated in Table 3 below. This increase is much more pronounced in the mid and low socioeconomic classes vis-a-vis the high socioeconomic classes. This is especially significant because, as we explore later in the article, it is the mid and low socioeconomic classes who are driving penetration in some product categories. However, even now only 51% of individuals belonging to the SEC D&E households and 77% individuals belonging to SECC households watch television seven days a week in comparison to 90% individuals belonging to SECA households.

Cinema appears to be losing its viewership base possibly to television. The percentage of the population

FIGURE 1



Base: All TV viewers, Source: IRS (1998-99)

TABLE 3

Television Viewership (Number of days in a week TV is watched)		
	(1990-91)	(1998-99)
Projected Base (in 000 s)		
All urban Adults (15+)	141741	169464
	%	%
None	26	23
Less than one	3	1
One to six days	31	10
All seven days	40	66

Source: NRS IV (1990-91) & IRS (1998-99)

who do not go to a cinema theatre today has increased to 50% from 40% a decade ago. This change is more evident in the low and mid socioeconomic classes. Ten years ago, 31% saw cinema at least once a month, while only 20% watch it with the same frequency today.

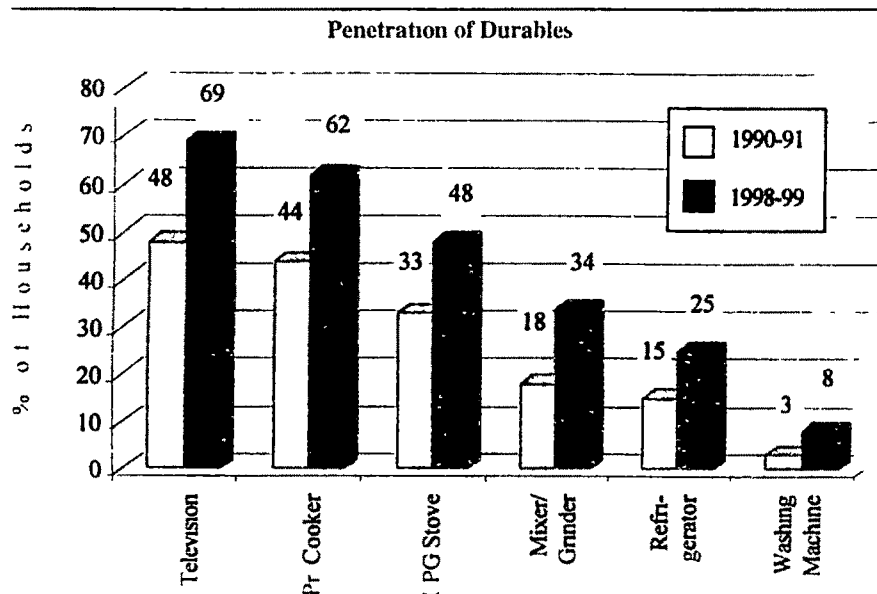
We have examined the penetration (percentage of households owning that durable) of some durables, i.e. television, pressure cooker, electric iron, LPG stove, mixer/grinder, refrigerator and washing machine.

Television tops this list of durables with an increase in penetration of about 21 percentage points between 1990-91 and 1998-99. This translates into a huge increase in base of nearly

15 million households. Slightly less than half these households belong to the low socioeconomic classes alone. Another quarter of the households belong to the mid socioeconomic class. Similarly, pressure cookers have registered an increase of 17 percentage points, mainly due to a large increase in penetration in households belonging to the low and mid socioeconomic classes. In 1990, penetration for both these categories was already more than 75% in the high socioeconomic classes. In other words, growth could have stagnated in these two categories if the penetration in the low and mid socioeconomic classes had not taken place.

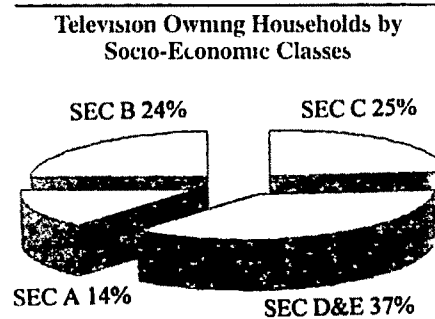
Consider this: currently 37% of television owning households are those belonging to the low socioeconomic classes. In terms of future potential as well, they are the largest untapped segment. Penetration of television in the high and mid socioeconomic classes is already above 80%, while in the low socioeconomic classes it is still only 51%. Herein lies the opportunity: one half of these consumers have been brought into the market, the other half remains

FIGURE 2



Base: All urban households. Source: NRS IV (1990-91) and IRS (1998-99)

FIGURE 3



Base: All television owning households
Source: IRS (1998-99)

untapped. Thus, if we were to consider which segment to look to for future potential for televisions, we should be looking hard at the low socioeconomic classes.

To further understand the market potential of households belonging to the low and mid socioeconomic classes, we examined the household penetration of some durables in these classes. Among households belonging to low socioeconomic classes, 68% own an electric fan, 40% own a pressure cooker, 34% own an audio system and 27% own an electric iron. Ownership levels in households belonging to the mid socioeconomic class are higher for these durables: 91% own an electric fan, 75% own a pressure cooker, 60% own an electric iron and more than a quarter own refrigerators.

Table 4 shows the absolute percentage increase in household penetration of some household durables between 1990 and 1999. Consider the increase in penetration of refrigerators, washing machines and mixers/grinders. These categories have shown the highest percentage point increase in penetration in SEC A households. In the low socioeconomic classes (SEC D&E), electric irons, LPG stoves, mixer/grinder (all household convenience appliances) have registered a healthy increase of 10 percentage points. However, in these socioeconomic classes the increase in penetra-

tion of refrigerators is relatively low (4 percentage points), possibly because affordability is an issue

Table 5 illustrates the absolute increase in household base (total number of households owning that durable) and the SEC wise composition of the additional base. Consider the case of mixers/grinders. In the last decade, there has been an increase of 9.9 million households owning mixers/grinders. 29% of these households are SEC B households, 28% are SEC C households and 27% are SEC D&E households. Thus the mid and low socioeconomic classes put together account for about 55% of the increase in household base. The scenario is similar for LPG stoves and electric irons. However, in the case of refrigerators and washing machines, households belonging to the mid and low socioeconomic classes comprise a smaller percentage of the additional household base.

Thus the mid and low socioeconomic classes comprise a significant segment of the market for some durables. However, they have a relatively smaller share in the market for higher end durables like refrigerators and washing machines.

Furthering this argument, let us look at two fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) categories, i.e. tea and edible oils. We examined the changes in penetration of the category at an overall level and specifically the pene-

	<i>Increase in household base between 1990-1999 in millions (projected)</i>	<i>Percentage composition of additional household base</i>			
		<i>SECA %</i>	<i>SEC B %</i>	<i>SEC C %</i>	<i>SEC D/E %</i>
Television	15.04	9	19	25	48
Pressure Cooker	13.14	10	22	27	42
Electric Iron	9.80	15	27	28	31
LPG Stove	10.60	14	29	30	27
Mixers/Grinder	9.89	16	29	28	27
Refrigerator	6.57	24	35	26	15
Washing machine	2.64	44	34	17	5

Source: NRS IV (1990-91) & IRS (1998-99)

tration of the category in 'loose' as opposed to 'packaged' form.

In the last decade there has been some increase in the penetration of both these categories. However the percentage of households using loose tea or loose edible oils have decreased. This change is much more pronounced in the tea market.

In the last 10 years, the penetration of tea has gone up by 5%. The real change is the decrease in the proportion of households using loose tea. A decade ago, nearly half the tea-consuming households used loose tea (either only loose or both loose and packaged). Today, this proportion has dropped to about a third. Though this change has been observed across all the socioeconomic classes, the larger percentage point drop has been seen in the mid and low socioeconomic classes. Thus, households belonging to the mid and low socioeconomic

classes are buying packaged tea more than before.

Similarly, in the edible oil market, the percentage of households using loose edible oil has dropped by 7 percentage points over the same time period. However, this change is mainly observed in the high and mid socioeconomic classes.

In conclusion

* It is now becoming evident that households belonging to the mid and low socioeconomic classes are becoming relevant target groups for certain products.

* Together they constitute more than 70% of urban households.

* In the last decade they have grown in economic power.

* Their exposure to media, especially TV, has also grown in the last decade.

* In the last decade, they have driven penetration for certain durables like televisions and pressure cookers. In some other categories (indicative list) they have contributed substantially to the absolute increase in user base.

* This suggests that households in the mid (SEC C) and low (SEC D&E) socio-economic classes are segments that can no longer be ignored. Marketers faced with the issue of slowdown in growth due to saturation in the high socioeconomic classes should examine these segments more closely as they represent increasingly important sources of future growth.

TABLE 4

Absolute % Increase in Household Penetration between 1990 and 1999					
	ALL	SECA	SEC B	SECC	SEC D/E
Base All Urban Households	%	%	%	%	%
Television	20	6	11	19	25
Pressure Cooker	17	7	13	18	18
Electric Iron	12	12	13	13	10
LPG Stove	15	13	18	19	10
Mixer/Grinder	16	20	23	21	10
Refrigerator	10	19	18	13	4
Washing Machine	5	21	9	4	1

Source: NRS IV (1990-91) & IRS (1998-99)

Branding information: new rage or new age scourge

DILIP CHERIAN

INFORMATION seeking is a pervasive human activity that has a large social dimension in the modern environment. We gather information through a number of sources: universities, libraries, media and now the worldwide web to increase our knowledge, both for practical reasons and for pleasure. Either way, we look for quality information. If knowledge is food for the soul then we want to nourish it with wholesome as opposed to junk food, often because our survival depends on it. This is why we direct our information seeking at authoritative informants. For instance, if I want medical information, I call a doctor or look up a medical book, I will not ask a child or a passer-by on the street for this information.

Complex societies delegate their communal knowledge gathering and knowledge dissemination to various specialized agencies. Justice systems are set up to determine who

commits crimes, census takers are appointed to collect population statistics, schools are established to transmit knowledge. Some societies insist that all the knowledge they hold is branded to start with. Take the instance of the Noble Peace prize winning work *I, Rigoberta Menchu*. When it was discovered that there were substantial inaccuracies in this account of Guatemalan authoritarianism, they were vigorously denied. The clash of information versus knowledge was sought to be quelled by appealing to the concept of a 'brand'. Menchu's brand of experience was sought to be explained away as belonging to the collective consciousness of the Mayan people. When brand is used to clobber knowledge then information cannot be questioned. Or so it seems and on that, more later.

Community knowledge systems are often run by the state. However, in free market economies,

thriving private and public run industries are also involved in the collection and the dissemination of information. In the last century, media companies have grown from being publishers of simple tabloids to global multimedia giants providing a wide range of information and services – financial, political, commercial, technical. For instance, McGraw Hill began with the two founders, James H. McGraw and John Hill as separate and independent publishers of technical and trade journals in the late 1880s. Today, many mergers and acquisitions later, McGraw Hill is one of the premier information providers in the world – including the highly leveraged Standard and Poor brand for trusted global financial information and analysis.

Information provided by government and non-government organizations or by corporate bodies, whether on paper or on the web, has the advantage of acceptable authorship and is hence verifiable. Any information can be cross-checked with a user's internal reference maps, i.e. cross checking with what one already knows or believes to be true. This kind of critical thinking, *within personal reference frameworks*, is usually done by most information seekers. This is of particular significance today, when an enormous glut of information has become available with the rapid development of e-information. If the Internet is the cheapest and most accessible source of information, it is also often the most anonymous and the least trustworthy – demanding a high degree of critical thinking to sift through the vast amounts of disinformation and misinformation passing for truth.

Information that is required for daily living in a society – information of laws, services that human beings make use of, the many functions of government, tax benefits, scholar-

ships, social welfare services, and so on has till recently only been available in print, as government publications, or as verbal communication from government offices and press briefings or as direct written communication between the state and the individual. Without free access to such information, a modern society would experience great discomfort and would gradually enter chaos. Information deprived societies slide downwards into an ignorant mess or worse, into totalitarian controlled economies. Today these options of information deprivation are getting choked off. Information is almost all pervasive and sometimes impossible to stem.

Today we have the dawn of a new era. We now have societies where almost all the information we want is available on the web. The web sites actually hosting and serving this information are usually irrelevant to a suffer, only the information is of importance. Net businesses have become savvy to this and have found ways to capitalize on certain categories of information that are most commonly searched for. The compiled information they are charging you for is in the public domain – usually stored as raw data in government computers.

Enter the US government. On 26 June 2000, President Clinton announced the creation of a new web site 'intended to be every citizen's window to the federal government'. It is to be called Firstgov.gov and will enable American citizens to search the full text of every government web page currently on the internet, estimated to be between 50 to 100 million pages.

Reaction to this announcement has been one of mild curiosity to outright consternation by private business groups which see this as the first step to regulating the flow of information which, they say, violates the pub-

lic's Right to Information Act. They accuse the US government of 'seeking to brand federal information' and by leveraging the site's brand, trying to control how other web sites use and display information. Even assuming that the US government is working in the public interest by authenticating information, such branding of public information by a government could open up a can of worms – setting precedents for other governments not to subject themselves to the same checks and balances that limit the powers of democratically elected governments.

This leads to the question: Is authentication of information on the web the only way to bring order to chaos? The reply must be: Not if all authentication (and I use the word 'all' advisedly) implies *branding* with its two handmaidens – *selectivity* and *price*. Since knowledge is critically dependent on the information that is available, once selection has affected or impacted the choice of information, how useful is it for those who hope to pursue the path of knowledge? Can there be free knowledge – as we understand it – without access to unfettered information? Once the screen of *selectivity* has been applied is it still the kind of information that can be the basis of knowledge? Is knowledge itself branded by this process?

Given the fact that currently regular internet users still number only a few million worldwide and are mostly limited to a socio-cultural elite if one discounts occasional users in cyber-cafes and the like, such authentication is best left to the users themselves who are perfectly capable of differentiating, for the most part, between good information and disinformation. However, as internet users grow in numbers and the web itself becomes a mass media, on-line infor-

mation branding will inevitably gain momentum

Branding at its core is a mnemonic device used by corporates to expand their markets. As customer numbers grow, we are talking of the initial community of top quality buyers being joined by many, many more. The first rung of top quality customers are usually the ones with the most information, who have direct contact with the producer or who know enough to be torn away from another product or service to the new product on offer. When new customers join in droves, the level of direct contact reduces.

The new customers know less, they, however, must know enough and must be able to discern good from evil (read the competition). Here enters the BRAND. If branding is done well then customers know all about the product. They trust the brand because they know the product from the brand alone. Soon others join in. They see others trust the brand so now they too buy the product. The brand grows.

At that time, the second aspect of branding – *price* – will quite possibly determine who gets the best product (read knowledge). Furthermore, the quality of information itself – which is the basis of knowledge – will become questionable once it is screened. Can we have a free society where all information is screened and knowledge is necessarily imperfect, biased and incomplete? Will moves towards a knowledge economy or even more broadly, a knowledge society, require freer access to information or will big information brands dominate the knowledge landscape of the future? Will quality information brands become so expensive that the new knowledge elite of tomorrow automatically also becomes the only economic elite – with no anxieties of

their domination being under threat? Will capital again exact its ultimate revenge?

Are we, in fact, moving towards a Brave New World as Luciano Floridi suggests, or is this overstating the case? Although internet users are growing rapidly in numbers, the world wide web is growing faster, and much of the material available on the web is stored as raw data – the bricks and mortar of information. If this free availability of raw data on the web is eroding the value of a large number of intellectual works on paper, particularly bibliographies and compilations of data earlier generally inaccessible, it is also democratizing knowledge for the same reason – easy accessibility. Only compiled information can be branded or intellectually owned. Raw data will, and ultimately must, in a free society, continue to be freely available in the public domain.

Virtually all information that exists in the public domain has always been available to everyone usually for the price of the information medium itself. This was once universally true and the price often varied – be it a moment of your time, the cost of a book, a magazine, a subscription to a newspaper or a news channel. This is true even of such momentous and fundamental bits of information as Galileo's discoveries, Newton's laws and Einstein's theories. Whole societies and nations have progressed through easy accessibility to the enormous body of information that has been collected over centuries of human endeavour and of human observation.

But knowledge and information, even when branded, have constantly to face the test of truth. A wonderful instance that comes to mind is Newtonian truth. By all accounts Newton's enormous clout as a scientist should have endowed his brand of

information as fundamentally infallible. But clearly brands too can collapse ignominiously. Most of us do not know that Newton crowned his scientific career by becoming England's top economist. But because he called disastrously wrong on the direction of the economic forecasts he made, Newtonian certitude did not become a byword for the dismal scientists of his era. His career as England's Warden of the Mint is today a forgotten part of Newton's achievements. A brand flayed is a brand failed.

News items that are reported by daily newspapers or news channels is information of events that have taken place in a country and in the world, speeches that have been made, actions that have been taken by governments, acts that have been performed by individuals, be they criminal or heroic. This raw data is also freely available, the newspaper or TV channel merely collates it and serves it in a convenient package. There is no copyright on this data. It is not, or at least ought not to be, the intellectual property of the news-servers.

But it isn't as if everything that is news and therefore ought to be information is necessarily available. Those who have studied the recent history of Iran will agree to this. Basic information and even newspapers that report them are routinely closed depending on who comes to power. Repression of information is the dark side of the Islamic Republic. So is information, even when it is pure electoral news, truly free anywhere in the world? The answer is a resounding no – except on the web where easy and cheap accessibility and the plurality of information protects against disinformation and censorship.

In the last century, an enormous quantity of disinformation in support of one ideology or another was dis-

seminated by the mass media. Historically these have been powerful instruments for spreading propaganda, often leading to horrendous human suffering, as the German concentration camps bear mute testimony to. Today, in our own country, our children are victims of a pernicious kind of information branding that is taking advantage of a school system to mould unformed minds. Disinformation serves its purpose best where the three conditions of ignorance, coercion and impotence exist, and nowhere do they exist more fully than in primary schools, especially when even the legal guardians of children are themselves ignorant either of what is being taught or of how these teachings will define the thoughts and personalities of their children and impact society later on.

Branding of information in the service of politics or big business is another cynical form of disinformation – and we are being constantly bombarded with it, whether in the form of misleading advertising, ‘feel good’, self-congratulatory corporate newsletters, podium-thumping political speeches or, most cynically, touting of toxic substances as being good for the health by members of the medical profession in the pay of big business. Though I could quote a number of examples to illustrate this point, I’ll content myself with water fluoridation in North America and here I quote David R. Hill, Professor Emeritus, The University of Calgary. ‘Fluoride has been peddled as a health nutrient for over fifty years in North America in the press and the advertising media – often against glaring scientific proof to the contrary. The only people who truly benefit from the widespread use of fluoride in toothpaste and in drinking water supplies are the big industries that generate fluoride as a waste

product. They not only solve their pollution problems but make a tidy profit selling their toxic residues to be eaten, drunk and spread on teeth by an unsuspecting populace governed by gullible officials.’

Information technology has greatly enhanced the potential value of most information that is in the public domain. How government bodies and public and private sector businesses will exploit this potential and what effect this will have on what has hitherto been an unhindered flow of information is unclear. A time may come when the plurality of information may cease to exist – and all that one will have access to is branded, authenticated and hence, virtually censored information.

The risk of this happening will increase when convergence is fully implemented. The pulling down of technical barriers that currently exist between different types of media will cut down the plurality of types of mass media and hence, information. Once this happens, the emergence of monopolies with their enormous potential for facilitating and spreading disinformation will constitute a real threat to the relatively free flow of information that exists today. What information advisors have done to kings and prime ministers, what spin doctors assist corporators with and what publicists achieve routinely for celebrities are all variants on a more sinister theme that still has to be fully played out. Are we nearer an end game today as information – branded or bandied – becomes mere putty in the tubes of the medium that transports it and of engineers who manipulate its flow? How all this will impact human social and intellectual development can only be guessed at as we enter the new millennium of what is being branded as the knowledge century.

Challenge of consumerism

HARISH BIJOOR

AT the end of a rather long working millennium, one has the luxury of putting up one's legs on a soft stool, sinking into a soft beanbag and thinking soft thoughts of a soft millennium gone by

I call it soft, particularly from the Indian perspective of things. The hundred marketing years behind us were distinctly soft years. Soft issues faced and soft options exercised. Soft covenants arrived at softly.

The years ahead look different indeed. Hard years indeed! Troublesome marketing times. Troublesome times for the marketing of the country that is India. Tough years that will call for tough ways.

Let's then explore what is ahead of us. Visit and revisit the strengths that exist. Strengths that will redefine the competitive advantage of India in the world market. The India ahead as the new consumer superpower of the world. The new intellectual capital of the world and of course the new seat of the buying, selling, marketing and facilitating superpower. The new role of India the buyer, the seller, and the broker.

Let's do this scenario painting exercise of the key competitive advantage of India in the markets of the future by visiting briefly the key issues we see as distinct points of strengths.

The British left India as a nation of shopkeepers. Our retail universe that covers a nano-fraction of supermarkets but large numbers of small and medium sized shops and cubby holes of retail commerce in remote inaccessible corners of the country, is the biggest you can find in any of the 182 countries that comprise the world and its consuming markets. A population of 12 million retail outlets to service the needs and requirements of the world's second biggest consuming mass of people!

The one big strength that less than one other nation in the world can stake its claim to is the size of the population that rests within the boundaries of our country. A huge weakness of gigantic proportions when viewed from the many development-oriented periscopes of the past. Not so when you view it with the future in mind. A future that is energized by these very large masses of

people who have been the biggest liability for the nation of a billion plus!

The past viewed people as a liability. Not enough physical work to go around, not enough food to eat and of course not enough education to ventilate around. Every bit of progress that development achieved was sacrificed very, very quickly (possibly even before the economist was able to record and publish the feat) at the altar of population and its rather robust pace of growth.

While every sector of the economy did reasonably well in bits and patches over the last hundred years, so did the sector of population growth. Stretched food resources, stressed out finances, a pathetic situation on the physical infrastructure front, and a complete lack of positive momentum represented the development of the last hundred years. People were therefore the biggest liability.

Not so anymore. Not in the hundred years ahead of us. One of the biggest assets of marketing-based India is its numbers in the very many homes that dot the countryside of 'sunny-side-up' India! Lots of existing people and a robust yen to propagate more of the kind only means a lot more stomachs to feed and a lot more bladders to fill. Lots more bodies to clothe and a lot more minds to educate.

Think of a product. Think of a service. Think of a want. Think of a need. The biggest and the best of them will linger in the land that is India! The marketing future of India is therefore made. Ready at the takeoff stage which will have many a Schumpeter stumped!

But then, people are not the only need of a consumer market. Consumption is certainly not the only key to unlock the riches of a marketing man's Pandora's box. Money somehow seems to be the real key. More

money in these many hands, more the consumption. But then, is the money around?

While the pessimists' answer to the question will say that men without money or the means to make the money are of no use to marketing and its future, the fact remains that there is a value in the market that has a huge potential. A potential that can well nigh break open huge values in the times to come.

Let's just remember one thing. India has been a poor country for a long, long while now. Folks below the poverty line have numbered a strong platoon of people. And despite it all, the population has grown, survived and continues to thrive in its sheer numbers. People have found a way to survive. The fittest have survived on high value brands, the less fit have thrived on brands of a lesser calibre in the country. Those even lower in the hierarchy have survived on the fringe of the commodity in every category of want and need. Consumption needs have always found answers. Consumption solutions for all!

There is therefore a pyramid of consumption that lies all over the slopes of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. But then, everybody, rich or poor, has fallen within the confines of this pyramid. And just as long as they do, there is indeed potential for a robust market for commodities, quasi-brands, brands, super-brands and of course at the ultimate level of the self-actualizing folk, no brands at all!

Every one of these segments has a value though. And in value rests the potential for the marketer. The one big true-blue competitive advantage for India of the present and India of the future is indeed its large population base articulating every basic need in consumption of products, services and utilities.

Time to change the paradigm of India's population then! Every marketer of whatever origin, be it from within India or outside, will queue up in the consumer markets of the country, trying to woo the wallet of the willing. As traditional source markets reach a plateau in their consumption, nascent markets like the one in India will hold a great deal of allure to the marketing man in his western strait-jacket.

The competitive advantage of India will rest in both its own shores and in the foreign lands of its source markets. As the WTO regime opens up markets that do not discriminate and markets that don't raise the usual high tariff walls that have been the distinct characteristic of the past that has gone by, the Indian product and the Indian brand has a challenge to seize and exploit to its advantage.

The India brand is the centre-point of this entire exercise that waits to unfold. The country and its many unique propositions show an excellent potential packed into the future.

This potential needs many God-fathers to unlock though. The name India is in itself filled with a mystique of the past. Tigers on the streets, snake charmers at the *chowrasthas* and the great Indian rope-trick are all images that keep coming back ever so recurrently in the life of the Indian in foreign markets. India is still a mystique. And India is ancient. A civilization as ancient as can be. A glorious history, a rich tapestry of tradition and a whole bunch of assorted mystique attached to the Indian brand that is connected to all things natural and of course all things beautiful, is something that needs to be exploited to the hilt.

No point then to negate the mystique and charm of the brand there is in the minds of peoples outside the shores of India. Might as well use it to

advantage. Add all those dashes of high-technology to all the soft touch of the nation in the minds of the consumer in foreign markets, and you just might have a potent broth that will reposition the brand that is India.

The competitive advantage of an image versus that of a functional reality has seen the winning potential in the image and the brand. As the future evolves into one that is besotted more with imagery than with the functional trait, piggybacking on the India brand, a whole host of honest products and services that cling on to the tail of the mystique that is India, is certainly a possibility of significant competitive advantage.

The one big missing element in the marketing of the India brand has been the commitment to brand thinking within the realm of Indian bureaucracy. The policy-maker needs to shift the way he thinks and the way he operates in the realm of the image.

Preserving a whole host of things that are distinctly Indian and distinctly ethnic will be the biggest task for those in the game of maintaining the key differentiators which will be the USPs of the India brand. Indian foods are already a big thing in the West. A United Kingdom without *balti* cooking and butter chicken masala would indeed be a poorer nation of gourmet eaters¹.

Natural health remedies, natural cooking, the organic nation, the realm of alternate medicine and health are but only some of the areas that will distinguish India in the future. There are a whole host of other areas to explore. No one nation in the world can claim to offer the kind of variety that India can—in its food, clothes, festivals, rituals and, of course, in its many Gods. India as a safe tourist destination of the future is still but a dream. The potential however lives on.

The many, many competitive advantages of India, glorified in recent years in the realm of InfoTech, front-ended scientific research work that is currently on in the outer-periphery of achievement, India's strides in the realm of PharmaTech and allied areas are possibilities that have been highlighted well and possibly even inflated beyond levels of credible usage in the past. Avoiding these realms, one can only look at the basics that India offers to the markets that are emerging now and to the markets that will emerge in the future.

The effort that has to be made in order to establish and capitalize on the basics just outlined as key competitive advantages of the country require an investment in the realms of positive development of the network economy, its infrastructure base, its communication ability and of course the key factor of brand-led thinking.

India has long since lived as a commodity. It is time then to yank itself out of the commodity mindset and establish its presence in the brand-led world. The world today is one that is moved more by the image than by the reality. India needs to seize its place in the limelight of brands.

As everything in the marketing lives of the Indian gets redefined in the near and medium-term future, there is no other option but to depend heavily on the key strengths we have taken for granted in the past. Even considered a liability in the recent past.

Awakening the Indian economy and its competitiveness lies in the realm of the high quality products that will roll out of our ancient manufacturing facilities. These products need to talk of a quality that will battle the best that will come in from every direction there is. And that too at low cost. Our *desi* chickens will need to compete with American chicken legs

that will walk into the kitchens of our country.

As many an industry faces an impending closure, the best will indeed survive. The fittest will survive and the rest will vanish into the limbo of the have-beens. As all this happens and as social turmoil seizes the 'have-beens' by the jugular, there is ahead of us a moment that will truly be the defining moment when the entire bureaucracy that runs the competitive model of Indian industry and enterprise will wake up all of a sudden, with a jolt. A nightmare that is bound to seize the policy-maker, the implementer and indeed the key participant of the economy, the man in industry, all together by the short hair.

And this defining moment is the one that will turn the paradigm of Indian competitiveness we have followed so very vigorously for all these years, upside down. This will be the moment of rethink. A point of time when the truly important will replace the truly insignificant. A pursuit of which our model of industrialization, thrust upon the nation during the Nehruvian era, glorified in the past.

The WTO regime is the catalyst of this process. And the first of the bombshells will be fired in the dominant sector of agriculture in the Indian economy. And its almost here¹.

We are, I suspect, very close to that defining moment. Let's witness and let's participate in that process of turmoil. We have no choice, in any case¹.

The competitive advantage of India in world markets is best assessed by taking a quick peek at the possible models of competition in markets of the present and the future.

If we look around the nations of the world and correlate models in current use, there are four distinct patterns that emerge. Four clusters that have

whole sets of nations congregating in models that seem to work for each of them differently and with different levels of efficacy. Needless to say, the peculiarities of each nation in question dictate the distinct choice they have made for themselves. Let's visit the clusters. And let's call them all kinds of animal names.

The Earthworm model. The passive model of competitive reaction. The invitation theory that is best practiced by the earthworm. A rich worm really. It knows the basics best. It is in constant touch with the earth that it seeks nourishment from and nourishes back simultaneously. A fundamentally strong being.

Several problems in this model though. It is passive for one. Non-reactive. A model in the self-fulfilling prophecy mode. The best example of the fatalistic theory in practice. When faced with danger, all it can do is continue its humble journey in the earth. Competition kills this model with ease. There is no reaction. The fatalistic model of competition at its best!

Is India here?

The Snail model. The common competitive model practiced by a whole host of nations. This model is reactively pro-active. A clear cocoon orientation. When faced with competition and danger, there is a regression into the shell. The withdrawn marketer at play. The philosopher marketer even! The marketer who revels in the safety-static nexus. Waiting for the competition to just go away, so that normal life may resume again!

Is India here?

The Porcupine model. This model tells the competitor clearly of the array of weapons that are available for retributive action. There is a clear emphasis on the display of the arsenal. It believes in overt display. A clear détente model of competition. Avoids

speculative action and is ready for the real battle.

Is India here?

The Everyone Else model. This is the model of the real-time player in competitive markets of the present and certainly the future. This is the real-time marketer. Reactive when necessary. Pro-active when necessary. Guerilla in tactics when necessary as well!

This is a constant-change oriented model that believes in watching the scenario carefully and reacting accordingly. Making forays into proactive territory on a speculative basis. Never mind if only one of those sixteen forays actually click! Life in the fast track of competitive marketing is pretty unpredictable and speculative. Change here is absolutely discontinuous. Making a decision on a point of competitive strategy based on happenings of the past and the present could be disastrous. The future never ever happens the way the past decided.

Change here is so discontinuous that it is aptly illustrated by the example of the baby-arrival process in the house. The first child in this baby-boomers house is born out of a Caesarian section, gone in for by an overzealous gynaecologist. The second baby of the house is, therefore, predictably to be one out of a similar process. Caesarian section! No, it isn't! Change is discontinuous. The second baby is a natural birth. The third child is due to happen then. This time round, it's Caesarian section as well. Oops!

The fourth child of this baby-happy home is due. Change is indeed discontinuous. There is no predictability here. Guess what? This time around, the baby is actually conceived, carried and delivered by the father of the baby. Oops again! Change is indeed that discontinuous.

Shouldn't India be here?

Media onslaught

SUHEL SETH

INDIA today is an exciting land in an exciting age the first winds of change blew not when the economy opened up as we think in the early 1990s, but when India was exposed to colour television. It is ironic that it took a sporting event (the Asiad) to unleash for Indians a new way of looking beyond their windows into the world at large. Media intrusion had begun in right earnest.

Colour television in itself was a statement of status it distinguished the wealthy from the not-so-wealthy. Colour television was the new consumer discriminator in a country which had just two brands of cars and a near single-brand monopoly in the two-wheeler segment. Indian consumers were bored and dulled into buying brands. They had to pay more and wait longer for brands they today reject with ease.

Monopolistic regimes were at their peak in the early 1980s words like conspicuous consumption were relevant only in a few pockets. In the 1980s, there were only 8,700 credit-card holders the same number in perhaps one or two affluent colonies in South Delhi today. The media scene in terms of choice was not so very different either. Consumers were just beginning to relish quality journalism in *India Today* and admire the panache of investigative journalism that *News-track* had unleashed. But given the times that we lived in, most cities had just a couple of newspapers in English and a single vernacular newspaper.

Television, though in colour, was state-controlled the influences of Hum Log and Buniyaad were more in the arena of commenting on the Indian family than in creating bridges between the West and us as we see it.

today Television then, as it does today, had a huge component of film-based entertainment which was what captured the Indian imagination. Chitrahaar and the weekly Hindi film on television became opportunities for family bonding and reunion. Many Indian families happily altered their meal timings to adjust to programming schedules and perhaps, in the subconscious, they were also ushering in a wave of consumerism that would one day sweep us all.

Convenience products had just emerged and Maggi's 2-minute noodles were perhaps a sign of things to come. Remember that was also the time when our politicians were much younger and better looking. Television made a John Kennedy out of young Rajiv Gandhi, and his boyish good looks and youth full innocence were reflected so ably through television. The Indian consumer had begun to derive first blood from advertising that talked to him and with him. Thanks to the increasing influence of television, he saw an increase in advertising in the form of television commercials or in the form of promotions which captured the flavour of the moment. It was television which helped create a slot for Hinglish, the language of today's India, be it in the music we hear or the brand communications we receive.

Television and a surfeit of magazines became the passport for the Indian to explore the world, as it were. With markets prising open consumerism, it was now the turn of brands to leverage this media intrusion and this they did with gay abandon. Aided by the fact that India, being the cricket-loving nation it is, had cricket matches that became the ultimate media aphrodisiac. Both the channels as well as the marketers used this newfound medium to great advantage and sud-

denly there were endorsements for products, matches being sponsored and the return of the cola to India. It was Pepsi which changed the face of media-led consumerism in 1986. Given the kind of market expanse it was seeking and the depth of its brand reach, Pepsi used television as the ideal conversion vehicle. From brand salience to brand purchase, it travelled the full distance.

But while media can certainly be lauded for the role that it played in harnessing consumerism in India, we must pause and examine the evolution of the Indian consumer. The Indian consumer was shaking off the shackles of monopolistic regimes. These regimes were crumbling not just because of media but also owing to a real need for India to develop and make itself a global player. Politics had a role to play in this evolution as much as media did. For every additional television programme which added value to the Indian consumer movement we also have Manmohan Singh to thank. He began the era of reforms on the instructions of the International Monetary Fund but quickly realised that in this lay India's future of becoming a relevant world-economy.

It was against this backdrop of a new school of thought that we saw, for the first time, choice becoming a relevant issue in the Indian marketplace – a word that had earlier been made redundant with trite licensing norms. It is true of any market that it can only be relevant and throbbing if the players in it are relevant and successful as well.

In India, consumerism had always been looked down upon. This was a social imperative and not just an economic one. The Indian was encouraged to save rather than spend, given the history of India and the fact that many many Indians were on the

brink of poverty and penury either because of businesses failing or relocation (refugees) the habit of saving had certainly cramped consumerism. What was required was the unlocking of this potential. It was critical to rid the Indian consumer of this feeling of guilt whenever he or she spent any money which is why communication in the earlier days always focused on family health (almost like insurance advertising) and never promoted the joys of buying per se.

India had to transcend from that mindset but the journey was painful and tormenting because while on the one hand markets did open up, so did poverty, thereby increasing the chasm between the haves and have-nots. It was a paradox that most marketers would have been scared of. Add to this the fact that there was no one India. Both in terms of purchase-behaviour or linguistic unity you had a lethal concoction that communication had to swallow whenever it attempted to reach consumers. And, this paradox no communication vehicle could cover.

This is why we saw the birth of language channels. At this time, the entry of the Star TV Network also brought India on a global media platform like never before. I have often believed there were two Indias as far as consumerism is concerned: the India before and the India after Star TV. It is not as if Star TV was doing anything dramatic but for the first time the Indian was exposed to global programming in the truest sense. What Star TV also brought to the table was a bouquet of channels which included the enfant terrible of all channels: MTV.

Many people were up in arms over the MTVisation of India and blamed corroding values on MTV. While some thought they were just us-

ing the channels as a flogging horse, my own belief is there was some truth. Media has a strange way of influencing human behaviour. Media is the art of creating habits and it is this art form that can be most devastating in shaping consumer behaviour and consumer opinion. This is what MTV did at that time in India. Music was no longer restricted to Lata Mangeshkar or R D Burman. The Springsteens of the world was what India was looking at and for.

It was this borderless world that media created for the Indian consumer. Almost simultaneously, to some divine design as it were, more and more companies were entering India. The classification of homes switched from television owning homes to cable and satellite homes and today's figure of 70 million C&S homes is only an indication of the kind of media fragmentation we are about to experience.

I will not suggest that it was media which changed the Indian consumer or which made him the consumer that he is today because just like everything else there was a rejection of media as well. Not all TV channels were successful, not all TV programmes had great TRPs. Slowly the bugbear of the South being forced to watch Hindi programming was eliminated in the form of regional channels such as Sun, Udaya and Gemini. Not to mention the fact that our very own state television went the regional way as well, with almost state-wise specifications.

It was an India that was rapidly embracing change. But in this entire hullabaloo, the Indian consumer was conveniently forgotten. Marketers forced their global understanding on him and that once again caused the consumer to reject them. Coca Cola's early failure in the Indian market is a testimony to how horribly they got

their consumer insights wrong. But Coca Cola was not alone. India's largest car manufacturer was caught napping too when the Korean chaebols unleashed competitive advertising for their cars.

Surprisingly it was Korea's Daewoo that first advertised cars in India despite Maruti being around for more than a decade. What was this a reflection of? In my mind it represented marketer apathy for consumers. Relationship marketing was never top-of-mind at any Indian company and suddenly these MNCs began wooing the Indian consumer. The same consumer who had learnt to live with neglect and a poor post-purchase scenario was being emboldened to say his piece. At the same time India was also witnessing a spate of activism.

Mandal was over but causes like Narmada had become equally critical within the thinking set. So it was not surprising that activism crept into the consumer movement as well. Once again media played (as it does today) a critical role in recognising the value of a consumer. But that can also be attributed to the rejection that Indian media was witnessing. Prima donnas had been replaced by publications which offered value propositions. So it was not surprising to see the *Times of India* metamorphose itself into a newspaper which embodied everything that editors would shun. From promoting beauty contests to prop sales of group publication *Femina*, to promoting spirituality, the *Times of India* exhibited the role of consumerism in media as well.

How is the Indian consumer faring amidst all these socio-economic changes? If statistics are to be believed, then he is doing pretty well. Markets in almost every category have expanded to attribute all that only to more television channels or a greater number of

newspapers would be silly but at the same time it is pertinent to note that the first mental block in consumerism is cultural (and not economic) in nature. The cultural part is more difficult since the latter can be built around a credit economy which is what essentially the United States is. Today we have a credit card population which runs into millions, almost every category, be it detergents or toothpastes, cars or two-wheelers, magazines or newspapers, is multi-branded. The concept of retailing is no longer a pipe-dream.

The invention of desire is complete and the consumer is responding with alacrity and avarice. One could never have imagined the explosion in the branded apparel market but the fact that India today has a branded apparel market worth a staggering Rs 7500 crores is an indicator of increasing consumer spending even across categories which were earlier price-driven. So is the truism that convenience products, right from branded spices to pre-mix idlis, have gained prominence on kitchen shelves.

The moot question that begs an answer is whether consumerism *per se* is bad. My belief is that it is not, for the simple reason that it is one insulator against bad quality and high prices. The Indian consumer today is the recipient of world-class products in many categories without paying an attendant premium resulting from either monopolies or poor scales of efficiency, both in manufacturing and the delivery of products. When Mother Dairy opened its first milk booth way back in the 1970s, many thought it was an idea far ahead of its time. Today when we have an entire complement of milk products from cheese to skimmed milk, the consumer keeps saying *yeh dil mange more*.

The Indian consumer has also recognised that the media will not only provide him with an insight into what's available in the markets, it will also help him determine what to buy. This is why it is not unusual for an Indian brand of consumer durables to be amongst the most-respected, and here one is talking about BPL. It has faced intense competition from the best in the world and has still maintained its own. BPL is a fine example of a brand which, though built by clever use of the media (remember the Amitabh Bachchan television commercials), has done a lot in the physical product domain as well, right from retailing to product design.

Consumerism has spread far and deep. It is an intrinsic part of India's evolution today as it should be of any emerging market which attempts to embrace global standards, both for its consumers and for its products. The face of consumerism has travelled from the days when rural India woke up to video-on-wheel vans selling detergents to the enduring saga of *The Bold and the Beautiful* and to the more recent divinity that a nation has bestowed on a quiz show – *Kaun Banega Crorepati*.

It is not ironical that India's most popular programme on television today survives thanks to sponsors which range from a toothpaste to a hair oil brand to a brand of two-wheelers. The circle of reason has embraced consumerism. For this and this alone, we must thank the explosion that India has witnessed in media.

The India of today, like any developed and sensitive economy, must recognise the intrinsic worth of consumerism and the role it plays in not just freeing markets but in the ultimate empowerment of the consumer.

And if for nothing else but this empowerment, it is time to declare India a country of consumers who finally have acquired the right to choose and therefore the right to reject!

Can 'Made in India' become a brand?

SHUNU SEN

BRANDING has a long history, both in India and around the world. The word 'brand' is derived from the word *brandr*, a word used by early Norse tribesman meaning 'to burn', as in branding livestock to declare ownership. No doubt, anyone who has read cowboy stories is familiar with the concept of branding cattle.

Over time branding of cattle became not just a mark of ownership but also of quality. In the Chicago meat market, buyers recognised quality beef through the brand mark on cattle. This was because the ranches which produced better quality of meat did so because of many reasons – better grass or more adequate supply of water, better living conditions for the cattle or a shorter journey to the meat market. No longer was 'meat on the hoof' a commodity, it was 'branded' (if a small pun is allowed) and the better quality was recognizable.

In its earliest form, a brand mark defined quality, a mark which differentiated a quality product from other similar products.

Many years ago, in the Soviet Union, when products were sold under a generic name, the factory manufacturing the product had to mark its identity on the packaging. Customers soon realised that a detergent powder produced in one factory was superior in quality to others in this category of goods. Hence, housewives would turn the packaging around, upside down, and, if necessary inside out, to identify the origin of the product and make

their choice on the basis of its manufacturing location. The serial number of the factory had become a brand as it differentiated from other similar detergents which, according to the state, were supposed to be identical in formulation and in every possible way. (Of course, this is similar to the Nirma story where the brand name was the only differentiator between totally similar products in the Ahmedabad market in the early 1970s)

A brand name or mark is also an identifier of the maker and carries with it the reputation of the manufacturer or the marketer. In its simplest form, this is true for a variety of commodities which are normally considered to be unbranded but carry an identification mark, and have done so for many years. Products and commodities such as jewellery, crockery, gold bricks and pipes carry a mark which identifies the producer. Often, even in such categories, the buyers choose their purchase on the basis of such identification marks. What does this mean?

Branding is neither new, nor confined solely to manufactured goods. Indeed, even in so-called commodity categories, there are reasons for consumer choice based on a process which is similar to the consumer choice process in a sophisticated category consisting of high quality brands.

Over the last hundred years there has been a proliferation of products due to mass production and distribution. As technologies developed it became increasingly difficult to differentiate in a given product category. Without having strong brands, consumers find it difficult to make a choice between a large number of products and services. In such situations, strong brands can differentiate between similar products and consumers use brands as a mechanism to make purchase decisions.

This has become increasingly important as functional differences between products have become almost inconsequential (but not necessarily unimportant). It has become usual for brands to differentiate themselves on the basis of non-functional differences between competing products. Finally, brand names are no longer applicable to just products as they are also being used for services, and even corporations. Indeed, there is hardly any category which is bought and sold that does not have a brand name in the world of today.

What, indeed, is a brand? Here are some definitions from management textbooks.

* A name, symbol, design, product or a combination of these, that identifies a seller's goods and services and distinguishes it from competitor's products.

* A name, trademark, product or logo to which a unique set of associations have become attached.

* A brand is a complex set of consistent beliefs and meanings held by its purchasers and users which are associated with the product or service but which exist over and above its obvious physical function – brands are found in people's heads!

In case you find the textbook definitions bland and boring, I would not be surprised. This is because they have all been written by professors from business schools. Let me give you some more definitions, which have been written by advertising executives and specialists in communication. A bundle of functional and emotional benefits (or a bundle of feelings, meanings and emotions), a name with a reputation/a product with a reputation, a mark of pride, a simplifier of choice, product(s) with an attitude, products are 'what companies make' – brands are 'what customer buy'.

I like these definitions much better, particularly that of a brand name being 'a mark of pride' or 'a product with an attitude'. My favourite is the last which differentiates between a product and the brand.

In today's world, brands must be relevant to the needs of the consumer, if not unique, at least different in their offering which should carry both functional and emotional benefits. Having said that, let us return to the original question: What is a brand? I would define a brand as, A name for a marketable unit to which a set of associations and benefits – functional and emotional – have become attached.

Ultimately brands should motivate consumers to buy the brand offering in preference to other alternatives. One should remember, however, that brands may have functional and emotional associations which are not benefits. For example, Lux toilet soap is associated with film stars, a strong emotional association but not a reason to buy the brand. Similarly, Nike, the famous sports shoes and clothing brand is associated with the 'swoosh' motif, a strong functional association but not a benefit in itself.

It is possible to classify brands into many categories. For example a simple brand is a brand name with no benefits or associations attached. A negative brand, on the other hand, would be a brand name with negative associations. Such a brand is more a liability rather than an asset. Indeed, many brands are silent brands. These are weak or commodity brands, names with associations but with no real reason for purchase.

But what is a strong brand? I have just modified my earlier definition so that a strong brand may be defined as: A brand name to which a set of unique, relevant and motivating

emotional and functional benefits have become attached

Fortune magazine publishes a list of The World's Strongest Brands every year. Here is the list for the year 2000: Coca Cola, McDonalds, Sony, Nike, Microsoft, Walmart, Ford, Levi, Gap, and Amazon. Quite a list, and, not a single Indian brand name on it. Indeed, *Fortune* being an American magazine has a US-centric view of the world, so that 9 out of the 10 brands are American.

Brands are important from three points of view. First, they have a role to play in the market place. Second, the consumers are impacted by brands in their purchase decision. And finally, there is a company or a corporate perspective as to the role of a brand. I have tried to present the reasons as to why a brand is important from all three perspectives in the chart given below.

We have not as yet appreciated that in India brands are the key value drivers in a business. Traditionally Indian business has accumulated capital and assets as a route to pursue growth. Little thought has been given to the productivity of the asset, indeed in many cases the high cost of capital and asset formation has led to value destruction. Indeed, the winds of liberalisation have demonstrated how many large and powerful businesses, such as the House of Mafatial and

Sarabhai's, have destroyed value to such an extent that the original businesses just do not exist anymore or have become BIFR cases. Most significantly, neither of them had actually developed a brand name of note and relied entirely on the family name.

As we have seen brands can and do provide and create real value. The value of a brand is measurable and there is a strong case for showing the value of the company's brands on the balance sheet. Strong brands do need to be supported but usually require lower capital expenditure, provide superior performance, and can ensure future growth and higher value.

It is a misconception that only a high level of advertising expenditure can create a strong brand. There are several steps that need to be taken to create a strong brand. Brand owners must invest in maintaining strong brands by:

- * **Innovating** Strong brands constantly innovate to delight their potential and existing customers, not just through product innovation but also innovations in the other elements of the marketing mix such as packaging, pricing, distribution, promotion and sponsorship. Pepsi, in India, is an excellent example of such an innovative brand.

- * **Gain mind share and market share** through relevant and powerful adver-

tising. Strong brands are created and maintained through effective advertising which is relevant, clear and concise in communication and has a 'big idea'. A big idea is a distinctive expression or a creative device which is uniquely associated with the brand and the brand promise. An example of such a big idea in India is the motif of the 'girl in the waterfall' in Liril's advertising.

- * **Distribution** In India this is probably the most important factor in creating a strong brand. To paraphrase the saying of an earlier chairman of Coca Cola company, the brand must always be within an arm's length of desire.

- * **Expanding consumer base** It is important to understand that in India a brand must have wide appeal. The market for niche brands is normally unprofitable and hence a mass brand is critical for financial success.

- * **Finally, by keeping margins intact and maintaining capital efficiency** This is not only important for rewarding the shareholder but to ensure that sufficient money is available for investing and maintaining strong brands.

There is evidence available worldwide that the performance of companies is directly linked with the strength of the brand name. A study conducted by McKinsey in 1999 across 130 countries worldwide demonstrated that on average the total return to the shareholder was five percentage points higher than companies which had weak brands.

The time has come for Indian business to create strong brands because they create value. This means that brands must have greater focus which provide relevant and motivating benefits to the consumer because only such brands can create value for the business and the shareholder.

<i>The Market</i>	<i>The Consumer</i>	<i>The Company</i>
Create preference between similar products	Remove uncertainty	Increase profit
Provide protection against new entrants	Enable 'badging' of self-image	Protect revenue
Sustain premiums and margins	Concentrate information (i.e., values, beliefs, etc.)	Create new segments/growth
Simplify choice in a complex world		Guide brand activity Motivate staff Manage emergencies

The Amul saga

VERGHESE KURIEN

THE success of the Amul brand name has, no doubt, resulted in my being asked to comment on its history and the reasons for its success. I have, therefore, reflected on the long history of the brand to see if I could distil reasons why Amul is a name widely recognised and respected, not just in our cities and towns, but in our villages as well.

Probably the easy, but nonetheless wrong, answer is that Amul has been advertised well. Certainly it has helped that those responsible for keeping the Amul name in the public eye have used considerable imagination and, if I do say so, 'The taste of India' is nothing short of brilliant. However, there is much more to it.

A successful consumer product is the object of thousands, even tens of thousands of transactions every day. In these transactions, the brand name serves in lieu of a contract. It is the assurance to the buyer that her specifications will be met. It is the seller's assurance that quality is being provided at a fair price.

If Amul has become a successful brand – if, in the trade lingo, it

enjoys brand equity – then it is because we have honoured our contract with consumers for close to fifty years. If we had failed to do so, then Amul would have been consigned to the dustbin of history, along with thousands of other brands.

The tough part of the use of a brand as a contract is that every day is a renewal, if, just once, the brand fails to meet the customer's expectations or, more exactly, if it fails to delight the customer, then the contract loses its value. If Amul's sales continue to rise, it is because that contract has been honoured, again and again. I would like to think that the granddaughters of some of our first customers are now 'contracting' with us to buy their butter, cheese, baby food, chocolates and other fine Amul products. It is also a fact that when we first thought of exporting to West Asia and even to the United States, it was because of the loyalty of Amul customers who, even when far from home, still craved our 'taste of India'.

What goes into the 'contract' that is a brand name? First is quality. No brand survives long if its quality

does not equal or exceed what the buyer expects. There simply can be no compromise. That's the essence of the contract. In the case of a food product, this means that the brand must always represent the highest hygienic, bacteriological and organoleptic standards. It must taste good, and it must be good.

Second, the contract requires value for money. If our customer buys an Amul product, she gets what she pays for, and more. We have always taken pride in the fact that while we earn a good income for our owners – the dairy farmers of Gujarat – we don't do it at the cost of exploiting the consumer. Even when adverse conditions have reduced supplies of products like butter, we have resisted the common practice of raising prices, charging what the market would bear. Rather, we have kept prices fair and done our best to ensure that retailers do not gain at the consumers' expense.

The third element of the contract is availability. A brand should be available when and where the customer wants it. There is no benefit achieved in creating a positive brand image, and then being unable to supply the customer who wants to buy it. In our case, over the years we have built what is probably the nation's finest distribution network. We reach hundreds of cities and towns through a cold chain that not only ensures that our products are available, but they reach the customer at the farthest end of the country with the same quality as you would find in Ahmedabad or Vadodara.

The fourth part of the contract is service. We have a commitment to total quality. But, occasionally, we may make a mistake – or, our customer may think we've made a mistake, and the customer, as they say, is always right. That is why, for Amul, every customer complaint must be heard – not just listened to. And, every customer com-

plaint must be rectified to the extent humanly possible.

For close to fifty years now, Amul has honoured its contract with the consumer. The contract that is symbolised by the Amul brand means quality. It means value for money. It means availability. And it means service.

How did the Amul brand become what it is? To answer that, we must journey back in time, to the history books, to the time of India's independence because Amul's birth is indelibly linked to the freedom movement in India. It was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who said that if the farmers of India are to get economic freedom then they must get out of the clutches of the 'middlemen'.

The first Amul cooperative was the result of a farmers' meeting in Samarkha (Kaira district, Gujarat) on 4 January 1946, called by Morarji Desai under the advice from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, to fight rapacious milk contractors. It was Sardar's vision to organise farmers, to have them gain control over production, procurement and marketing by entrusting the task of managing these to qualified professionals, thereby eliminating the middle men, the bane in farmers' prosperity.

The decision was taken that day in January 1946. Milk producers' cooperatives in villages, federated into a district union, should alone handle the sale of milk from Kaira to the government-run Bombay Milk Scheme. This was the origin of the Anand pattern of cooperatives. The colonial government refused to deal with the cooperative. The farmers called a milk strike. After fifteen days the government capitulated. This was the beginning of Kaira District Cooperative Milk Producers' Union Ltd., Anand, registered on 14 December 1946.

Originally the Anand pattern included dairy cooperative societies at the village level, and a processing unit called a 'union' at the district level. Inspired by the Kaira Union, similar milk unions came up in other districts too. In 1973, in order to market their products more effectively and economically, they formed the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Limited (GCMMF Ltd.). GCMMF became the sole marketer of the original range of Amul products including milk powder and butter. That range has since grown to include ice cream, ghee, cheese, chocolates, shrikhand, paneer, and so on. These products have made Amul a leading food brand in India.

The brand name AMUL, from the Sanskrit *Amoolya*, meaning priceless, was suggested by a quality control expert in Anand. The first products with the Amul brand name were launched in 1955. Since then, they have been in use in millions of homes in all parts of India, and beyond. Today Amul is a symbol of many things. Of high quality products sold at reasonable prices, of availability, of service.

There is something more, though, that makes the Amul brand special and that something is the reason for our commitment to quality and value for money. Amul is the brand name of 2 million farmers, members of 10,000 village dairy cooperative societies throughout Gujarat. This is the heart of Amul, it is what gives strength to Amul, and it is what is so special about the Amul saga.

In the early days of Kaira Union there was no dearth of cynics. Could 'natives' handle sophisticated dairy equipment? Could western-style milk products be processed from buffalo milk? Could a humble farmers' cooperative market butter and cheese to sophisticated urban consumers? The

Amul team—farmers and professionals—confounded the cynics by processing a variety of high-grade dairy products, several of them for the first time from buffalo milk, and marketing them nationally against tough competition

What began way back in 1946 was really an effort to carve out a truly Indian company that would have the involvement of millions of Indians and place direct control in the hands of the farmers. It was a mandate for producing, owning and marketing and above all, building your own truly Indian Brand. And successfully at that

You will appreciate that when the lives of lakhs of farmers depend on a brand, and when your history is grounded in the Independence movement, when not only competitors but even your own government questions you, then your resolve to be the best is like the finest steel

Amul, therefore, is a brand with a difference. That difference manifests itself in a larger than life purpose. The purpose—freedom to farmers by giving total control over procurement, production and marketing. Amul and all other milk products produced by cooperatives were born in struggle. It was the producers' struggle for command over the resources that they create, a struggle to obtain equitable returns and a struggle for liberation from dependence on middlemen. It was a struggle against exploitation. A refusal to be cowed down in the face of what others believed to be the impossible

Amul's birth was thus a harbinger of the economic independence of our farmer brethren. Amul's mission was the development of farmers, nutrition to the nation, and heart in heart, the real development of India

Given India's vast geographical spread, the country had very few dairy plants at the time of independence. As the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri had said, 'One Amul is not sufficient. Many Amuls are the need of the hour.' This led to replication of the Anand pattern through the Operation Flood programme which has, amongst others, three major achievements to its credit, namely making dairying India's largest self-sustainable rural employment programme, bringing India close to self-sufficiency in milk production, and trebling the nation's milk production within a span of two and a half decades to make India the world's largest milk producer

Today, 173 milk producers cooperative unions and 22 federations play a major role in meeting the demand for packed milk and milk products. Quality packed milk is now available in more than 1,000 cities throughout the length and breadth of India. And this is milk with a difference—pasteurized, packaged, branded, owned by farmers—carrying the milk drop logo, like Amul, a symbol of quality

Over the course of Operation Flood, milk has been transformed from a commodity into a brand, from insufficient production to self-sufficient production, from rationing to plentiful availability, from loose, unhygienic milk to milk that is pure and sure, from subjugation to a symbol of farmer's economic independence, to being the consumer's greatest insurance policy for good health

What of the future? India's population has risen from 350 million in 1950 to 1,000 million today. As cities draw people to new employment opportunities, the current urban-rural ratio of 26:74 is likely to become 33:67 by the year 2010. As per available projections, the population by the

year 2010 would touch 1,190 million people. This means that by the year 2010, rural India will be required to support some 800 million people, an increase of 11% over 1999's 720 million rural people

Based on the current population demographics and projections, we estimate that there will be 260 million women in the age-group of 15-59 years in India by the year 2010 and this would further increase to 302 million by the year 2020, of which only 100 million would be literate. This means that rural women will comprise 21% of India's total population. In our country, most rural women contribute to agricultural and dairying activities—apart from the household work—and their activities are not included in India's GDP despite their significant contribution. Dairying is, therefore, very important to our rural women. For many, it is their main source of employment and income, incomes that they often manage themselves

Population gives us one picture. The other is provided by the demand for household commodities. By 2010, the national requirement for food grains will touch 266 million metric ton, rising to 343 mmt by 2020. For milk, estimated consumption will be 153 mmt by 2010 and 271 mmt by 2020. For edible oils, demand will soar to 9 mmt by 2010 and 13 mmt by 2020

It should be clear that agriculture will remain the most important engine of our economy. Amul and its cooperative sister brands are aware of this challenge. The future, they say, is at best a mystery. But, it should be clear that the needs of a nation on the move must be met. The country is young. There are more working women. The needs of an ever-growing population have to be met with sustainable economic development. And the demand

for milk and milk products, therefore, is only going to grow further. Couple this with the nutritional needs of the new and the old generations and it is equally clear that there will be a need for more value added milk products. This calls for production to be enhanced at even faster rate than it is at present.

There is also something very special about milk, something which requires that any brand for milk and milk products to act not simply as a seller, but as a trustee. Milk is not a white good or a brown good. It is not something people save their entire lives in order to buy – like a car, or a house. Milk is not a status symbol, rather it is the symbol of nutrition. Milk is a nearly complete food, providing protein, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients so essential to maintaining good health.

We realise the value of milk on the day the milkman does not bring it to our doorstep, when our children have to go to school without it, when we go without our daily cup of coffee or tea. And what would our lives be like without ghee, butter, cheese, curd, lassi, chaas and the like. Milk is not only an ingredient in our favourite recipes, it is an essential ingredient of life itself. And, by its very indispensable nature, it has one of the biggest markets – a whopping 82 mmt at a very conservative consumption of just 214 grams per day per person in India alone.

Our commitment to the producer, and our contract with the consumer are the reasons we are confident that cooperative brands, like Amul, will have an even bigger role to play in the next fifty years. Resources need to be deployed with a purpose and a commitment to deliver better results. There is no limit for a marketing exercise then. It must build India and its culture a second time round. An India, that is the land of our dreams.

Seeking competitive advantage

NANDAN MALUSTE

I CAN begin no better than the book's preface*, 'Why do some social groups, economic institutions, and nations advance and prosper?' This subject has fascinated and consumed the attention of companies and governments for as long as there have been social, economic and political units. In fields as diverse as anthropology, history, sociology, economics and political science, there have been persistent efforts to understand the forces that explain the questions presented by the progress of some entities and the decline of others. Porter was moving beyond the usual remit of business school professor – as an economist he was approaching a grand question in the tradition of Smith, Marx, Marshall and Keynes. Even while work-a-day investment bankers like myself can turn to Porter to guide the selection of sectors and entities to back, he aimed to be useful to a much wider band of practitioners and thinkers.

It was no armchair enterprise. MIT's Nobel Prize winning economist Robert M. Solow is quoted on the dust jacket, 'Michael Porter reaches his conclusions the old fashioned way: he earns them through solid research.' Porter's 1980 *Competitive Strategy*¹

* *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* by Michael E. Porter, The Free Press, New York, 1990.

1 Michael E. Porter, *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*, The Free Press, New York, 1980.

(uniquely reviewed twice by the *Harvard Business Review*) and 1985 *Competitive Advantage*² had already established his reputation for developing theories built on painstaking empiricism. He had a global following as a teacher. Further, as if to prove that 'there is nothing more practical than a good theory,' his consultancy firm, The Monitor Company, was already mentor to businesses, governments and multilaterals with issues beyond the commonplace. So Porter might have distilled his prior knowledge and experiences to address the questions raised. Instead, he orchestrated a study of world-beating industries across ten nations (Britain, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States) dozens of researchers and institutions, some celebrities in their own right, were involved.

What was the fruit of all this cultivation? It takes some 800 pages to describe in full. Even Part IV, Implications, is 260 dense pages with chapters on company strategy, government policy and national agendas. It is remarkable that this microeconomic work has so much to say to governments and nations – it is common for macroeconomics to be considered relevant at that level leaving microeconomic policy the subject of special pleadings by firms or industries. The most enduring output from the book is undoubtedly the 'diamond' model with its emphasis on clusters rather than narrow industry sectors. It is now so pervasive that I am tempted not to outline it in this short review. However, in a recent discussion even cognoscenti had only hazy notions of the model and how it establishes,

for example, Mumbai's unmatched advantages as South Asia's financial centre.

So, what follows is a sketch that inevitably loses the richness and depth of a full exposition. Porter hypothesises that four broad attributes of a nation interact (see Figure 1) to shape the environment in which local firms compete. The quality of this competition promotes or impedes the creation of global competitive advantage. The attributes are:

- 1 *Factor conditions* The nation's position in factors of production, such as skilled labour or infrastructure (or, traditionally, raw materials), necessary to compete in a given industry.
- 2 *Demand conditions* The nature of home demand for the industry's product or service.
- 3 *Related and supporting industries* The presence or absence of supplier and related industries that are internationally competitive.
- 4 *Firm strategy, structure and rivalry* The conditions governing how companies are created, organised, and

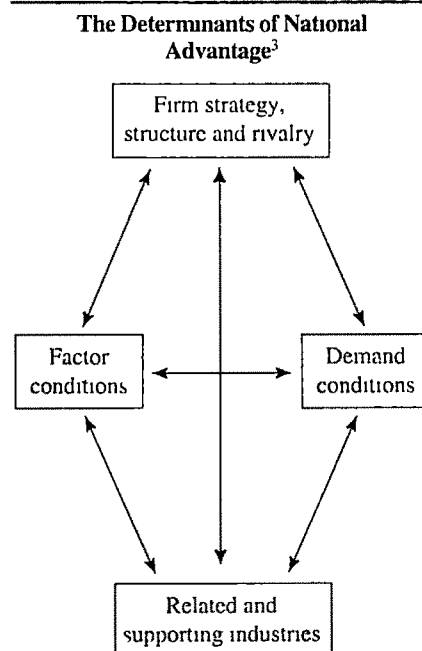
managed and the qualities of domestic rivalry.

'The determinants,' writes Porter, 'individually and as a system, create the context in which a nation's firms are born and compete: the availability of resources and skills necessary for competitive advantage in an industry, the information that shapes what opportunities are perceived and the directions in which resources and skills are deployed, the goals of the owners, managers and employees that are involved in or carry out competition, and most importantly, the pressures on firms to invest and innovate.'

'Firms gain [global] competitive advantage where their home base allows the most rapid accumulation of specialized assets and skills, sometimes due solely to greater commitment. Firms gain competitive advantage in industries when their home base affords better ongoing information and insight into product and process needs. Firms gain competitive advantage when the goals of owners, managers and employees support intense commitment and sustained investment. Ultimately, nations succeed in particular industries because their home environment is most dynamic and the most challenging, and stimulates and prods firms to upgrade and widen their advantages over time.'

'Nations are most likely to succeed in industries or industry segments where the national "diamond", a term which I will use to refer to the determinants as a system, is the most favourable. This is not to say that all a nation's firms will achieve competitive advantage in an industry. In fact, the most [sic] dynamic the national environment, the more likely it is that some firms will fail, because not all have equal skills and resources nor do they exploit the national environment equally well. Yet those companies that

FIGURE 1



² Michael E. Porter, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*, The Free Press, New York, 1985.

³ Porter (1990) p. 72.

emerge from such an environment will prosper in international competition

'The "diamond" is a mutually reinforcing system. The effect of one determinant is contingent upon the state of others. Favourable demand conditions, for example, will not lead to competitive advantage unless the state of rivalry is sufficient to cause firms to respond to them.'⁴

Further, 'Nations succeed not in isolated industries, however, but in *clusters* of industries connected through vertical and horizontal relationships. A nation's economy contains a mix of clusters, whose makeup and sources of competitive advantage (or disadvantage) reflect the state of the economy's development.'⁵

Mumbai, for example, has well developed clusters for the financial services. These include not only stock exchanges, stock brokers and underwriters but international and domestic commercial banks with nationwide, even worldwide, payment systems, commodity markets, South Asia's best infrastructure for telecom, commuting, power supply, health services, education and leisure, information technology vendors including network and facility managers, regulators for the financial sector, courts and lawyers with decades of experience with financial transactions, financial journalists, with deepening knowledge and probity, able to inform and police, sophisticated users of financial services including merchants, speculators, international traders and manufacturers, accountants, including the global 'Big 5', hundreds of thousands of middle level workers competent to process financial transactions, ancil-

laries ranging from couriers through printers (able to proof financial documents) to *dabbawallahs*, office cleaners and security guards, and networks of relationships and trust facilitating quick information flow and efficient deal making.

These clusters, more than any *navratnas*, deserve to be treated as national treasure.

These ideas are also demonstrated in India's software services sector. For a long time it depended only upon factor conditions – the relatively low pay for Indian software engineers available for body shopping. Pioneers like Faqir Kohli of Tata Consultancy Services have long contended that real progress required sophisticated demand (especially, automation of government), better telecom infrastructure, development of the entire IT cluster (including hardware) and so on. In the event, demand has been improved through linkage with the USA, Indian communications infrastructure has improved immensely in recent years, free imports (and exports) have integrated the Indian and global IT clusters. And, as a result, India has emerged as the world's largest software exporter, second only to the USA. NASSCOM's agenda, developed with McKinsey, is for continued development of the 'diamond'.

That Porter's ideas work in 'Indian conditions' (a phrase commonly used to make special pleadings that appeal to the *swadeshi* lobby) was demonstrated in 1994 by the Confederation of Indian Industry/Harvard Business School project on the Indian economy. Professors Porter, Ghemawat and Rangan persuaded a galaxy of Indian businessmen and policy makers on such propositions as

* Industrial development required focus on clusters, not on industries

* Regions are best developed through investment in physical and human infrastructure rather than subsidies

* Industry dispersion policies tend to break up cluster formation. The professors showed that industry specialisation and concentration is necessary not just across countries, as reported in the 1990 book, but in regions within countries.

* Competition has to be promoted to build world-beaters, monopolies, whether private or public, to incentivise a drive for product and service excellence. Some industrialists use this argument to plead that international liberalisation should be postponed till domestic competition has built up. On the contrary, the Porter advice would be to use foreign competition to enliven domestic monopolists like Life Insurance Corporation of India.

* Import and export canalisation, preferred in the sixties and seventies to give India scale in world markets (as well as control to the mandarins), creates monopolies or monopsonies which are demonstrably inefficient and anti-innovation.

* Economic knowledge and information needs to be widely dispersed throughout India. This would not only enhance policy discussion, but also reduce the counterproductive ignorance and suspicion of business that even in the 21st century is much too common.

It is a measure of the CII-Porter project's influence that only half a dozen years later most of these ideas have passed into the mainstream of Indian policy debate, where they are quoted without acknowledgement of source. Many practical men, to paraphrase Keynes, have become the unconscious slaves of this economist. Even though *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* studied countries in

which 'Indian conditions' did not prevail, at least superficially

It is commonly experienced that intellectual acceptance is insufficient to create change. If I am habituated to drinking in company, for example, the next social gathering I attend encourages me to imbibe even against medical advice. Similarly, firms and nations have histories, geographies, relationships, contracts, policies, vested interests and so on, inhibiting change. Porter moves the focus of attention from macro to micro economics, and goes beyond analysis to model building and specific recommendations for firms, governments and nations.

Yet, as Karl Marx is quoted on his grave, the point is to change reality, not merely understand it. Can that be done? Or are Porter and his ilk mere philosophers? As Zhou-en-lai is reputed to have said about the French revolution (nearly two centuries after), it may be too early to comment. However, the history of India and its firms over the last decade has been encouraging, though it cannot be said that Porter was the sole, or even the most influential, prophet for the period.

What have been some of the main features that promoted change in India in the early nineties? I would identify the following:

¹ An external payments crisis which allowed radical ideas to gain influence among the Indian elite, with support from multilateral financial institutions.

² The collapse of the Soviet Union which left Stalinists without intellectual, moral or material support.

³ Increasing empirical and theoretical evidence (see for example, Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom*⁶).

6 Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1999.

that a liberal economic and political regime delivers welfare efficiently. And widespread recognition that this does not mean laissez-faire which is unacceptable in a country which experiences extreme poverty.

⁴ International agreements, importantly the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs which led to the World Trade Organisation, requiring India to open its economy or be abjured by the overwhelming majority of possible foreign business partners.

⁵ A highly experienced individual, possibly surprised to find himself prime minister and with little expectation of longevity, staked his political and personal capital on a programme of change.

This was quite an exceptional combination of circumstances. Which was perhaps necessary because a web of barriers opposes change in nations, even more than in corporations. Porter's books make no mention of these difficulties. However, his 1994 seminar listed barriers to change under the heads of attitudes, information, incentives and complexity. The seminar suggested that small, quick, wins might snowball into major shifts. And so it has been, though we now seem stuck on a plateau of middle height. Change management is becoming a major focus in management schools. Strategists need regularly to revisit Kipling's verse:

If you can dream – and not make dreams your master,
If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And – which is more – you'll be a man,
my son!

Interview

Alyque Padamsee is an advertising guru and theatre personality who is now a communications consultant. He is in the last stages of completing his second book on big ideas. In conversation with **Naazneen Karmali**

You first retired from advertising but now you're back in a manner of speaking. Tell us what you've been doing since you retired from Lintas?

I joined *Indian Express* as a consultant and was asked by Vivek Goenka to reposition the Express as a more dynamic paper. Though I appointed an advertising agency which turned out a very good campaign based on courage, I found that I missed advertising and all its multifaceted dimensions. One day you are dealing with family planning, the next day with tractors and thereafter with cosmetics. After a while, you just can't do without this variety. After three years with the Express I found it very dull. I said to myself, where are the tractors and where are the cosmetics?

So I gave up the Express consultancy. When I retired from Lintas I felt I do not want to continue with advertising because it wears you out too much, but then I missed it so I went back. Sorab Mistry, for whom I have undying affection and admiration, offered me a creative consultancy at McCann Erickson which is part of the Interpublic group. In addition, I have my own private clients for whom I do marketing of various products. To me advertising is all about human behaviour and human activity. That is really the essence of it. A lot of my colleagues will say that I'm talking from the top of my head, that advertising is all about selling goods. I don't believe that. I believe advertising is all about selling aspiration and hopes. Advertising holds

out the promise that tomorrow things can be better. To me that is the philosophy of life.

What is the kind of work you're doing with Chandrababu Naidu?

Chandrababu Naidu is like Tughlak, a man way ahead of his time. He is currently trying to motivate people to believe in their dreams. He has a simple slogan which sounds old fashioned but it is so true – dare to dream, strive to achieve. I did *Man of La Mancha* many years ago about Don Quixote and it had that wonderful song called 'The impossible dream'. Naidu is a man who has tremendous vision of the future, of tomorrow. He gets McKinsey to help him prepare his vision 2020, that is what Andhra can achieve by year 2020, and then he sets about achieving it. He has energy, he has ideas, and he has vision. His is leadership by motivation and cooperation. I'm working on a campaign right now for Andhra which is to try and get people to feel pride in Andhra. I hope I can provoke in people the ideas of change.

There seems to be a real drought of big ideas in Indian advertising today. Why is this so? Has creativity simply dried up before the pressures of the marketplace?

What has really happened is that the recession of the last two years in India, particularly in Indian advertising, has caused gloom. This happened in America in the 1970s after the oil crisis when suddenly everyone said, 'Oh my God, creativity is only a game!' When you're rich you can play this game but when you're not so rich then you must get down to the business of hard sell. Advertisers then want to focus on

basics let us state that this is the product, this is what it can do for you, and here are a lot of add-ons thrown in. So we've got this culture of freebies for everything and everywhere.

But I believe, and this is a personal belief based on my forty years as a communications man, that central to advertising is the idea that if you want people to change you've got to offer them some kind of incentive to change. When we were trying to move people away from washing their clothes with laundry soaps to Surf detergent powder, we had to educate them about what a bucket wash was. Surf wash was a big idea. With Lifebouy for example, we had to tell people, especially the rural folk, that this was the healthy, hygienic alternative to bathing with a grate or mud mix. That's how Lifebouy built its enormous franchise and is now found right through in every village in India. It isn't just a product made by Hindustan Lever, it is an idea of hygiene.

Similarly, a condom is not a product made by Kamasutra, it is an idea of protection. Behind every product there should be a distinct benefit for people, one that ensures them of a better future. Even a history book has value though it talks about the past. You have to look at the past in order to learn for the future.

Advertising seems to be very freebie-oriented today. How can one break out of this trap?

Well let me put it in a simplistic way. You have to go back to what the product really offers the consumer. I've been working on a very interesting product called Fast Relief. It was initially named Pain Relief but when I was appointed marketing consultant, I suggested that the name be changed. It's obvious. Research shows that besides removing pain, which almost any pain balm would do, the consumer is concerned with how fast it works. When you are in pain the only thing you want is relief as quickly as possible. I suggested that they reconfigure the formula to ensure that the balm lived up to its name and truly did offer fast relief. The client, hats off to them, accepted my suggestion and went with it. They had the guts to go back to the laboratory and reformulate.

If you recall, I'd worked on Fair and Lovely cream. The name said exactly what the product does. It makes you lovely and it makes you fairer. You may argue that this is a colonial hangup, but that's a separate issue. Product descriptions do offer something concrete to consumers. You must offer a long term proposition, something substantial over a period of time. This is something that is forgotten in

today's advertising. Freebies don't offer a long term benefit.

Take Liril soap. It not only offers you freshness but offers you a sense of freedom. It is not just a ordinary bath. The girl in the waterfall symbolises that the bathing experience can be *bindaas* and free. For the average Indian woman who is surrounded by chaos, in-laws, husband, children, the ten minutes in the shower are her own, where she can day dream. Now that was so compelling that the Liril ad has remained unchanged for 25 years by Hindustan Lever. They tinkered with some ideas but then I noticed that they went back to the waterfall. These long term propositions, these human values are embedded in the brand's very soul. It overnight made Liril the top selling premium toilet soap in the country and it has retained that leadership till today.

Do you see any other such compelling examples today of advertising that articulate a brand's soul in a humane way?

I see it in Raymonds. I think Raymonds embodies the idea of the caring man, although they say Raymond the complete man. The word 'complete' is a disguise. Saying caring would have conveyed the image of a sissy. By comparison, complete sounds nice and strong. Everything they show in the advertisement, however, conveys that he is a caring person who looks after his children and who takes a lot of trouble to find a long lost friend. So he is always a man who seems to be caring but they called it a complete man, which I think was very wise. For instance, I could have called Liril the *bindaas* soap but that would have been a mistake. You do not shout about your emotional proposition. You always offer the rational wrapped up in an emotional atmosphere. So Liril freshness is the rational element backed by lime, but wrapped up in the waterfall, which is the emotional emblem.

These are long term propositions which are quite different from the product demonstration kind of advertising. There's a wonderful commercial which shows a fridge door opening and a set of false teeth stored in a glass start chattering. I enjoyed this commercial thoroughly but other than telling me that the fridge is cold it does not offer anything else nor tap into my aspirations. Why, for example, would I want to own that particular fridge? Other refrigerators also give sufficient coolness and in fact, consumers don't have any complaints about coolness. On the contrary, they may not want it to be extra cold, so conveying the image of an ice box is a negative.

How do you go about the business of identifying the core emotional or aspirational issues?

I always got my inspiration from real life. For example, I did a public service film many years ago on old age. I tried to ask myself 'what is that old people actually missed?' I realised that it is not about loneliness, which is what most people think. It is that they feel they are not needed any more. When they retire, they feel they have lost their job and their family starts retiring them. They start saying, 'Dadima aap yahan baiti hye.' And after some time, Dadima begins to feel useless. Frankly then Dadima dies not of old age but of non-neededness, if I may coin a phrase. And that I saw happening to my mother, incidentally.

In the film we made, a little child offers her Dadima a needle and thread. She wants Dadima to thread the needle, so Dadima looks suddenly very interested and gets animated. She threads the needle once and misses, she tries again but she misses again. The third time she gets it through and the little girl is so happy she gives her Dadima a big kiss. There is only one line in the film that says, 'As long as you show them they are needed they feel loved.' Love is a matter of a thing being needed, it's not something abstract. The day your husband does not need you, that day you feel unloved. The day your company does not need you is the day your company doesn't love you. That's the way I come across insights from everyday life.

I can give you another example of Kamasutra condoms. For years and years condoms were sold on the basis of offering protection. The message was, 'Be good and wear a condom.' But for a man in the throes of sexual ecstasy, the last thing he wants to be is good! So I thought, why don't we have a condom that's a turn-on rather than a turn-off? We found that though Nirodh was known by 88% of the male population in India, it was used by only 2%. When we investigated further we discovered that men actually disliked it. It was considered as anti-sex and more like a medicine that men must take before sex. Even medicine requires some sweetener or else people do not drink it!

Now that so many multinationals have come in, their obsession with global campaigns throttles local creativity. Most campaigns are simply the same everywhere. So what scope and leeway do creative people have in such circumstances?

That is only in theory. When you watch TV or look at newspapers you find that a lot of foreign advertising has been adapted in some form in India to local mores. When it doesn't it fails, as in the case of

lifestyle advertising. Coca-Cola brought their own American lifestyle advertising to India 5 or 6 years ago. When I was asked to speak at a Coca-Cola conference, I told them that they were going about it in a wrong way because India was not ready for an American lifestyle. The reason why Thums Up has 40 per cent of the cola market is because it appeals to the Indian lifestyle. It is built on cricket which is a national passion. They said Thums Up will now quietly die away and Coca-Cola will replace it. I said I don't think so, not the way you are going about it. So I think that any foreign campaign that does not adapt itself will not succeed. Take the case of Kellogg's. Breakfast in America is milk or a glass of orange juice. So for them cornflakes is a sit down meal, a big breakfast. To Indians, cornflakes is a starter. A big Indian breakfast consists of rotis, puris, aloo, the works.

The Americans can't understand this. They come to India with the most absurd ideas. What every American or European company needs is someone who understands the Indian market. As I said in my book, MNC does not stand for multinational corporation but for Misleading National Culture. They need to understand that India has a culture that is Indo-centric. For countries which are very westernised, Hollywood is the big thing. But in India, Hrithik Roshan is a bigger star than Tom Cruise. We have our own icons because we have a culture that is peculiarly Indian and not something that's pseudo-American. Foreign companies operating in our market must realise that the new Indian is a mixture of western aspirations and ethnic traditions. For instance, we still believe in lavish weddings and are likely to do so for another 100 years. Unless this is understood multinationals will make mistake after mistake.

Indian owned ad agencies have been increasingly selling out to multinational networks. Is the Indian owned ad agency a dying breed?

Yes, you're right. Indians who pioneered ad agencies are selling out to Americans. This results in a kind of Americanized Indian agency which is not the same as an Indian Indian agency. The lure of money is irresistible. Those who haven't sold are probably holding out for a better price. Frank Simoes and Bal Mundkur have already retired. Sylvester da Cunha would too if he got a good price. So multinational money power will dominate the business. But if these foreign networks want to realise the value of their Indian investments, they must ask themselves why they bought the Indian agency. As simply a branch office or a stand alone

nationalised office? In the latter case, they'd be better off to put an Indian in charge who understands the local market

Then there's our worship of status which we call *izzat*. *Izzaat ka sawal* is a great motivator in India. An Indian will do anything for *izzat*, probably even kill someone. Again *khunnas* and revenge for family honour are peculiarly Indian.

What are the new challenges facing advertising and communication professionals?

Today, a lot of advertising people are setting up consultancy services. They have a good knowledge of the market and clients are looking for such marketing inputs. I think the agencies of today should be a combination of strategy, execution and marketing. And I will go one step further, they can provide help in product formulation. So if we take that approach, then the process begins with the formulation of the product, to positioning, to the strategy, to the creation of the advertising, to the placement of the advertising and more important, placement of the product in the market place. Kamasutra condoms is a case in point. We first thought of the positioning, then we thought of the name, and then we made the product.

Another example I can give you is of Jet Airways with which I was involved right from the start. The positioning was clear: the five star hotel in the sky. And it has stuck to that. This positioning has given Jet a different status. Similarly, if I bundle a toothbrush with *Filmfare* or with *Verve*, there is a whole difference in status. The one bundled with *Verve* would be regarded as a special toothbrush and it would get a better premium than the one bundled with *Filmfare*.

Everything in this world is sold. If a woman wants to attract a man, she wears lipstick. If a man wants to attract a woman he buys a flashy car. Everyone is out to sell something. Mr Naidu is out to sell the state of Andhra to foreign investors. Everything that is used to improve the future has to be sold.

How will the internet impact advertising in the future? What new challenges and opportunities does it pose?

As soon as the net becomes democratic and by that I mean the price of access comes down and computers become really cheap then it will spread like wild-fire across the country and across the world. Once that happens everyone will become net sensitive. Of course, the key is to make buying on the net cheaper than taking a bus to a retail shop. And once that happens the whole ballgame will change. Retail shops

will have to become entertainment centres to attract customers. And advertising will definitely be more interactive. For example, if Heinz is on the net and calls itself the most flavoursome ketchup in the world, it will have to offer customers the option of free samples. Customers will be able to simply type in their requirements and have it delivered to their doorsteps. There will be a direct correlation between advertising and sales which will happen at the same time. It will be like one massive Sears-Roebuck catalogue.

What happens to creativity then?

The emotional proposition will always be there. *Liril* will be sold on the net but that doesn't mean the girl will not jump around the waterfall. She will in some way on the net. If she stops jumping then you don't need the product. But advertising will be linked into immediate retailing. You could call it advertailing if you like!

Talking of books and the past, what motivated you to write your autobiography? Isn't that all about the past and nostalgia?

Nostalgia is a wonderful time pass, not merely a past time, and it's easy to get addicted to it. But when I say learn from the past I don't mean look at it and stay there. You have to move ahead. Writing an autobiography forces you to reassess yourself. Suddenly, you realise, hey, I never looked at my life that way. I didn't write my book because some publisher was paying me to do so. I didn't do it because I want to be famous, I've had my share of that. I did it because I don't want to die having left nothing behind in writing. But what actually happened was that I took a fresh look at my life and realised that I'd done so many stupid things. Looking at what I've done in retrospect suddenly gave me clues to my own nature.

So I would heartily recommend that everyone write an autobiography since it enables you to analyse and evaluate your own life. Not necessarily for publishing, but for yourself. Last year when I addressed the convocation at XLRI in Jamshedpur, I told the students that they should write a vision statement for themselves before they went into the big, bad world outside their institute. Forget about the company you join, what is your own vision statement, what do you want to do with your life? If you have no plans then you go with the circumstances, instead of going from one planned event to another. There's a big difference between the two. If you don't have a direction or a dream you can get lost.

Further reading

- Aaker, David A. and Erich Joachimsthaler** Brand leadership building assets in the information society O&M, January 2000
- Aaker, David A. and Scott M. Davis** Brand asset management Josey Bass Publications, July 2000
- Aaker, David A.** Building strong brands Free Press, December 1995
- Arnold, David** The handbook of brand management (the economist books) Perseus Publishers, March 1993
- Bernd H. Schmitt and Alex Simonson** Marketing aesthetics the strategic management of brands, identity and image Free Press, 1997
- Blackett, Tom, et al.** Co-branding the science of alliance St Martin's Press, November 1999
- Braunstein, Marc et al** Deep branding on the internet applying heat and pressure online to ensure a lasting brand Prime Publishing, August 2000
- Clifton, Rita and Esther Maughan** The future of brands twenty-five visions New York Press, March 2000
- Cohen, Steven and Ronald Brand** Total quality management in government a practical guide for the real world The Jesse Bass public administration series, Jesse Bass Publications, April 1993
- Competitive branding:** winning in the marketplace with value-added brands John Wiley and Sons, February 1999
- Court, David C., Anthony Freeling, Mark G. Leiter and Andrew J. Parsons** If Nike can 'just do it', why can't we? 'The McKinsey' 2 Quarterly 1997
- Court, David C., Mark G. Leiter and Mark A. Loch** Brand leverage 'The McKinsey' 2 Quarterly 1999
- Coyne, Kevin P., Stephen J.D. Hall and Patricia Gorman Clifford** Is your core competence a mirage? 'The McKinsey' 4 Quarterly 1996
- Czerniawski, Richard D. and Michael W. Maloney** Creating brand loyalty the management of power positioning and really great advertising Amacon, June 1999
- Dayal, Sandeep, Helene Landesberg and Michael Zeisser** Building digital brands 'The McKinsey' 2 Quarterly 2000
- De Chernatony, Leslie** Brand management (The International Library of Management) Dartmouth Publications, July 1998
- Desmet, Driek, Lars Finskud, Maurice Glucksman, Norman H. Marshall, Michael J. Reynier and Kim Warren** The end of voodoo brand management 'The Mckinsey' 2 Quarterly 1998
- Duncan, Tom, et al.** Driving brand value using integrated marketing to manage profitable stakeholder relationships McGraw Hill, March 1997
- Goodman, Jennifer** Career guide to marketing and brand management Vault Reports, September 2000
- Gregory, James R. and Jack G. Wiechmann.** Leveraging the corporate brand NTC Publications, May 1997
- Harvard business review** on brand management HBSP September, 1999 The Harvard Business Review Paperback Series
- Ind, Nicholas** The corporate brand New York University Press, September 1997
- Kania, Deborah** Branding Com online branding for marketing success NTC Business Books, November 2000
- Kapferer, Jean-Noel** Strategic brand management creating and sustaining brand equity long term Kogan Page, March 1998
- Keller, Kevin Lane** Strategic brand management building, measuring, and managing brand equity Prentice Hall, November 1997
- Knapp, Duane E. and Christopher W. Hart** The brand mindset five essential strategies for building brand advantage throughout your company McGraw Hill, October 1999
- Knudsen, Trond Riiber, Lars Finskud, Richard Tornblom and Egil Hogna** Brand consolidation makes a lot of economic sense 'The McKinsey' 4 Quarterly 1997

Lepia, F. Joseph and Lynn M. Parker Integrated branding becoming brand-driven through companywide action Quorum Books, October 1999

Lilien, Gary L. and Arvind Rangaswamy New product and brand management marketing engineering applications Addison Wesley Publication, May 1999

Linn, Carl Eric and Alan J. Bergstrom Brand dynamics factors and trade-offs affecting value development in branded goods and services Institute For Branding Leadership (Publications), April 1998

MacRae, Chris World class brands Adison Wesley Publications, August 1991

Maklan, Stan et al. Competing on value bridging the gap between brand and customer value Prentice Hall, October 1998

Marconi, Joe Beyond branding how savvy marketers build brand equity to create products and open new markets Probeus Publications, August 1993

——— The brand marketing book creating, managing and extending the value of your brand (Ama) NTC Business Books, October 1999

Morgan, Adam Eating the big fish how challenger brands can compete against brand leaders John Wiley and Sons, 1999

Ries, Al and Laura Ries The 11 immutable laws of internet branding Harper Business Publications, 2000

——— The 22 immutable laws of branding how to build a product or service into a world-class brand Harper Collins, October 1998

Robinette, Scott et al Emotion marketing the hallmark way of winning customers for life McGraw Hill, December 2000

Temporal, Paul Branding in Asia the creation, development, and management of Asian brands for the global market John Wiley and Sons, January 2000

Travis, Daryl and Richard Branson Emotional branding how successful brands gain the irrational edge Prima Publishing

Trout, Jack and Steve Rivkin Differentiate or die survival in our era of killer competition John Wiley and Sons

Upshaw, Lynn B. Building brand identity a strategy for success in a hostile marketplace John Wiley and Sons

Vault Reports Brand management the Vault com guide to marketing and brand management December 1999

Weilbacher, William M. Brand marketing building winning brand strategies that deliver value and customer satisfaction NTC Publishing, April 1993

WEB SITES ON BRANDING

gsbwww.uchicago.edu, Chicago business recruiting for brand management

www.boldkajira.homepage.com, Brands and branding

www.bpubs.com/marketing_and_sales/branding, Bpubs com, Branding and brand management articles

www.brandconsult.com, Publications regularly featuring articles on branding

www.brandingasia.com, Branding Asia

www.brandingasia.com, Current feature articles relating to branding written by Orient Pacific Century

www.btimes.co.za, Business books The encyclopaedia of brands and branding in South

www.business-times.asia1.com.sg, Biz IT on brands and management

www.cbah.com, Megan's law before the second circuit

www.dmi.org, DMI interests—brand

www.dmi.org, Smart things to know about brands and branding, John Mariotti, Don Schultz

www.emporya.com, Webbrands about web-branding

www.helia.fi, Brand bibliography

www.lippincott-margulies.com, Brand management for the next millennium

www.managingchange.com, Published articles, papers and presentations—overview

www.mcb.co/portfolio/jpbm/jourinfo.htm, Journal of Product and Brand Management journal overview

www.orientpacific.com, Asian business strategy and market research articles

www.raynet.mcmail.com, Books on branding brands and their companies supplement, Gale Research, 1997

www.shape-shifters.com, The Enterprise Group — books by John L. Mariotti Smart things to know about brands and branding, Capstone Publishing, Oxford, UK, 1999

www.std.com, User interface engineering—branding and usability article

www.wilsonweb.com, Branding on the web — web marketing today info center, articles by Michael Fischier, Round-up at the long term with branding

Comment

Silenced rivers

The World Commission on Dams report vindicates much of what dam critics have long argued. If the builders and funders of dams follow the recommendations of the WCD, the era of destructive dams should come to an end. Had the planning process proposed by the WCD been followed in the past, many dams would not have been built.

Patrick McCully, campaigns director of the Berkeley, California-based International Rivers Network

THE Government of India claims that the multipurpose Sardar Sarovar Project would irrigate more than 1.8 million hectares (mostly in Gujarat and some in Rajasthan) and solve drinking water problems in drought-prone areas like Kutch and Saurashtra in Gujarat. The Sardar Sarovar dam is the largest among the 30 'big dams' planned to be constructed on the Narmada river in central and western India. This dam, with a proposed height of 136.5 meters (455 feet), has emerged in the not-so-recent past as the focal point of the Narmada Bachao Andolan's concerted opposition and resistance.

The NBA has steadfastly maintained that 'tall' claims on the part of the government are exaggerated and untenable. The SSP would instead displace more than 320,000 persons and adversely affect the livelihood of innumerable others. NBA activists have even estimated that a population of at least one million would be dislocated if the SSP were to be completed (as a result of displacements caused by the canal system and other allied projects).

The NBA has been opposing this project for a decade now, and its activists sought to highlight demerits of the SSP during 1990-91 by employing statements of protest like *dharnas* or sit-ins and *satyagraha* or non-violent non-cooperation. The World Bank (that was

about to finance the dam to the tune of \$450 million) was subsequently 'compelled' to set up an independent review committee, the Morse Commission, the first of its kind. The Morse report indicted the World Bank on many counts, and (tacitly) supported the major human ecological concerns raised by the NBA. Adverse international reaction that had followed the Morse report finally decided the World Bank against financing the SSP.

The Supreme Court of India had 'stayed' further construction of the dam at a height of 80.3m in 1995 following a writ petition by the NBA demanding a comprehensive review of the SSP. However, in an interim order (February 1999), the Court gave a go-ahead for the dam's height to be raised to a height of 88m (85m + 3m of 'humps'). It was pointed out that this could lead to floods during the monsoon season, and well displace 2000 tribal households in about 50 villages. The Supreme Court finally delivered its judgement on the SSP on 18 October 2000, permitting immediate construction of the dam upto a height of 90m (in a 2 to 1 majority judgement). The judgement further authorized construction upto the originally planned height of 138m in 5m increments, subject to approval by the Relief and Rehabilitation Subgroup of the Narmada Control Authority.

It may be pointed out here that the Supreme Court's judgement has not *fundamentally* altered the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award which had earlier decided that land should be made available to the dispossessed at least a year in advance before submergence [Clause IX, Subclauses IV(2)(iv) and IV(6)(i)]. The Supreme Court's clearance of the SSP, moreover, has not been able to resolve critical issues involved like cost-benefit analyses of development and displacement, rehabilitation and social justice, grassroots (dis)empowerment, environmental and human ecological problems, and so on.

* I am grateful to Susanne Wong of the International Rivers Network and Subramanya Sastry of the Baroda, Gujarat-based Narmada Bachao Andolan among other activists and academics for their kind cooperation that has considerably facilitated my research.

Whatever.

Whenever.

Wherever.

At AFL, we move anything and everything to anywhere.
Now tell us when, where and what.

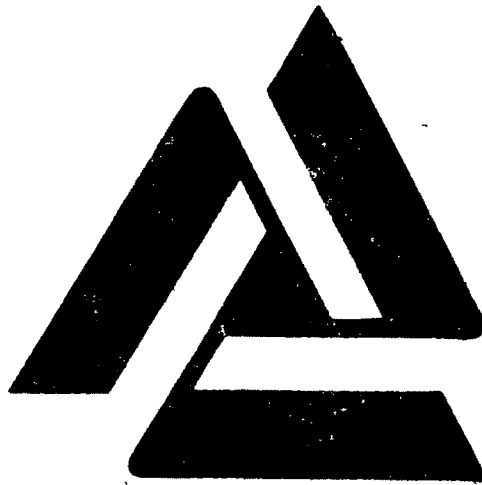


~~DHL~~ AFL FREIGHT SYSTEMS • AFL LOGISTICS • AFL INDTRAVELS • AFL SHIPPING • AFL INFOTECH

Airfreight Limited Neville House, Currimbhoy Road, Ballard Estate Mumbai-400 001 • Tel 2656761-7

Ambience/AFL/367

IL&FS



INFRASTRUCTURE LEASING &
FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED

We intend to study the NBA as an important social movement in present-day India and argue that big river dams are informed by a certain definition of development that is intellectually hegemonized by the compulsions of globalization. Such a definition not only reorients one's notion(s) of sustainable development but also one's worldview. This is, therefore, a politics of knowledge subversion that ought to be first challenged and next resisted by alternative vision(s) of public action and development underpinned by civil societal initiatives in the context of unequal exchange and an as-yet-unjust North-South dialogue.

We also argue that the very logic of globalization cannot be always reconciled with the institutions and imperatives of democratic politics. However, globalization can, and actually does, facilitate a certain kind of development that is more often than not biased in favour of the North rather than the South. Globalization, therefore, entails a 'paradox' of sorts: its dynamics require an enabling exercise of good governance while the structural adjustment programmes that it entails may well erode the popular bases of government. We would also try to identify and highlight certain angularities of the movement, and develop a few insights (in this process) that are perhaps beyond the texts of conventional subaltern criticisms and SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) analyses. Let us first recount the facts and figures, and subsequently develop and substantiate our argument(s) in the course of this exercise.

Construction of large dams on the Narmada in central and western India, and its disastrous impact on millions of people inhabiting this river valley have emerged as one of the most controversial socio-ecological issues in contemporary India. NGOs and other activist groups like Friends of the Narmada Valley, through dedicated websites, now communicate 'other'/grassroots viewpoints to the global community in order to generate debates whether the SSP (and such similar projects) should at all be allowed to continue or not in the larger interests of human ecology and sustainable development.

The Indian state, however, has never really been able to reciprocate any similar grassroots-level dialogue, and has even treated the SSP as an exercise in pragmatism that would focus on cost-benefit analyses in terms of an 'authoritative' definition of development. The state's intransigent attitude is yet to be entirely overhauled despite the President of India's (implicit) criticism of his own government on 6 December 2000 during presentation of the Ambedkar International

Award for Social Change to environmental activist Baba Amte.

We ought to realize that indigenous ways of tackling problems are occasionally better suited for sustainable development rather than solutions imposed from above by what we generally prefer to address as 'rational' modernity. While we are not convinced with the treatment of present-day narratives as a collection of so-called grand narratives, we are also not always in consonance with the politics-from-below point of view that tends to examine contemporary social activism and public action as an 'absolute' discourse in terms of black and white.

We cannot, therefore, afford to discuss our categories of analysis in straitjacketed terms like subaltern or élite. We are not quite comfortable with such categories and would rather interrogate these in order to explore other in-between areas of our study. This is why we do not want to examine the marginalized subaltern as someone who is bereft of any further 'paraphernalia' of identity. There are intra-subaltern strifes and tensions, problems of sustaining a workable stock of social capital within the subaltern ranks and file. Moreover, can we at all afford to look at the subaltern as a class or should we rather focus on a neoinstitutional (actor-oriented) argument that has to be located within the framework of postcolonial India's politics of state repression and displacement?

Battles of everyday life are sometimes best resolved with the help of organic resources. But subaltern actors are often without the *permission to narrate* and are, as a result, almost inevitably relegated to the margins of an élitist grand narrative that is empowered by 'superior' (?) knowledge of the material conditions of existence. NBA activist Shripad Dharmadhikary has itemized the movement's *alternative* agenda accordingly so that civil societal engagements can effectively resist implementation of the state's *developmentalist* agenda.

* The NBA would try to involve all aspects of the civil society,

* The NBA envisions the issue (in hand) as much larger than fight(s) over a specific project: the NBA is a coalition that challenges development philosophy, supports 'right to life', and challenges power/energy policy,

* The coalition works to mobilize locally affected people,

* The coalition demands local rights to fisheries,

* The NBA would take steps toward decommissioning/removal of dams,

* The coalition advocates re-operation/partial decommissioning to free land for people who have not been resettled,

* Dam decommissioning is the next logical step as part of a spectrum from re-operation to decommissioning,

† Experiences with decommissioning would help change mindsets,

‡ It is important to share information and debate issues

So when do people at the grassroots finally begin to identify themselves with their *own* institutions? This can only happen when they are compelled to deidentify themselves with the state's agencies (of coercion) that have so far been *mai baap* to them. Popular institutions serve as indices to assess the 'quality' of grassroots activism. Such institutions, moreover, have a proclivity to become somewhat indispensable as their networks expand and become increasingly detailed in terms of organization, their levels of encompassment and embeddedness in the everyday politics at the grassroots rise accordingly.

The role of social trust and networks of cooperation in the context of such 'decentralized' governance is rather vital. As Confucius had once remarked, trust is 'the' single most important factor in the political lives of men. Trust leads to social bonds and intra- as well as inter-institutional connectedness, this actually coheres institutions.

Trust indicates a system of values, a system of values implies social mores, and social mores are themselves an important institution. So trust can, and often does, lead to the sustenance of institutions. Neoinstitutionalism as a dominant frame of reference in present-day political sociology serves to explain the reality of governance or even the lack of it, it introduces a 'fresh' way of looking at and handling institutions.

For what are institutions but formal agencies and domains of human interaction? And is not the problem of governance really a problem of interaction in its primary sense, a problem of interface involving both the state and civil society/societies? If rules are the accepted (and expected modes) of behaviour, then institutions are the facilitating channels that help socialize such behaviour. Theorists like Douglas C. North, Robert D. Putnam and Subrata K. Mitra have developed this neoinstitutionalist paradigm.

Neoinstitutionalism, to understand the 'baffling' phenomenon of good governance, deals with actors and institutions as well as actors in institutions. Governance derives from an able handling of institutions. Actors who function through institutions tend to make a lot of difference as to how such institutions perform.

The kind of legitimacy and politics of ecology that we have in mind here would ideally emerge from real life, indigenous knowledge and intimate cultural paradigms of everyday life. We cannot deny the fact that institutions are necessary. But what are 'social' institutions other than interactive arrangements of power that are best evolved indigenously? They are actually a collective mode of behaviour, a matrix that sustains popular action and imagination, an integrating dynamic, and a procedural and regulatory imperative within a political system.

But this is not encouraged so far as environmentalist values of the establishment in India are concerned. We have to also remind ourselves that democratic political systems are required to grapple with adaptation, goal attainment, integration and latent pattern maintenance. Mitra has cautioned that 'if the wielders of power concede the point to those who challenge established values and norms, they risk losing their legitimacy. On the other hand, the failure to give satisfaction to the discontented might deepen their sense of outrage and alienation which can further reduce their legitimacy.'

Our neoinstitutional argument is also supported by rational choice analysis that suggests that any democratic régime would 'legitimately' prefer entrenchment(s) of its own power and authority rather than problems of governance, this, however, prompts an essential cost-benefit analysis, namely what amount of political investment to establish pro-people, responsive institutions at the grassroots would yield good governance?

The above is a critical analysis. A democratic régime like India's can be politically *successful* and thereby continue in power if it is able to properly 'read' its 'ground' realities and problems thereof. These problems are more or less popular in nature, and have a propensity to develop into 'discontent' of the ruled actors against their ruling institutions. So the actors in power have to redress these grievances of the actors at the grassroots in a political manner by effectively establishing and handling pro-people institutions. Only then would organic identification bind actors with institutions, only then would the incipient involvement noticed at the level of 'actors and institutions', arguably, transcend itself to the level of 'actors in institutions', consolidating both the level and the quality of environmental/ecological governance in the process.

Prasenjit Maiti

Communication

Will the literature of the fantastic be possible in the twenty-first century, with the growing inflation of pre-fabricated images?

Italo Calvino¹

HAVING gone through the November issue of *Seminar* (Situating Sociology), I felt a deep sense of dissatisfaction for two reasons. First, there was hardly any coherence between the problem posed and the essays that followed. Second, it had screened out certain crucial questions which, I think, are central to comprehend the state of sociology in India.

Though the issue under discussion has made commendable efforts at situating sociology, the very process of situating it has not been adequately sociologised, much less historicised. For instance, the symposium, as stated on the content page, was about 'knowledge, institutions and practices in a discipline'. However, very little, if any, discussion was devoted to the matrix of power behind the fashioning of knowledge and its relations with philosophy and *mutatis mutandis* to sociology. In what follows, a modest attempt has been made to critically situate sociology as I, a young practitioner of the craft, have (mis)understood it.

A historically grounded discussion on Indian sociology cannot bypass the grand ascendancy and expansion of European modernity, whatever its

rendition. Indeed modernity is the *sine qua non* of sociology. Agnes Heller is quite right when she says that, 'Sociology as a genre is the offspring of modernity and it bears the birthmark of modern parentage'.² Thus viewed, it is hardly amazing that the writings of all three consensual founding fathers of sociology – Marx, Weber, Durkheim (not to speak of Comte, the actual father) – dealt with modernity, albeit with its varied aspects.

While Marx was concerned with capitalism in the West and its absence in the non-western world, Weber's interest lay in the process of rationalisation of modern society. Likewise, Durkheim in his first major work, *The Division of Labour in Society*, sought to grapple with the evolution of society based on organic solidarity (which is coterminous with modern society) from the one based on mechanical solidarity.

Three sociologists, three themes, numerous concepts, but one problem i.e., the dynamics and complexity of modernity. And each of them regarded, with no major differences in essence amongst themselves, the 'Rise of the West' as 'exceptional'. It was considered as no less than a miracle, something invisible elsewhere in the world.³

The method through which they arrived at the exceptional 'Rise of the West', and this in itself was seldom contested, was that of vertical continuity. This

* I am indebted, as always, to Avijit Pathak for his unstinting support in the preparation of this note. J. P. S. Uberoi's series of informal lectures on 'European Modernity and Indian Tradition', delivered at JNU between 27 and 29 November, greatly helped clarify my ideas and sharpen the arguments.

¹ *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Vintage International, New York, 1993, 95.

² Agnes Heller, 'Sociology as the Defetishisation of Modernity', *International Sociology* 2(4), 1987, 392.

³ For the most recent avatar of the theory of European exceptionalism, expressed in terms of 'cultural capital', see A. Habisch, 'The Cultural Capital of Europe: Values, Norms and Institutions as Devices for European Developmental Success' in Imtiaz Ahmad et al (eds.) *Pluralism and Equality*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2000, 48-60.

entailed looking at the West in an evolutionary fashion. This is not to say that they were oblivious of the horizontal continuity. But, to be sure, insufficient attention was paid to this important fact. Or else, when they analysed the horizontal continuity, they did not problematize the 'Rise of the West' in a non-Eurocentric way. They looked at the world with their eyes fixed on Europe rather than the other way round.⁴

As a result, the non-western world was often portrayed in starkly negative terms. For Marx, if the capitalist mode of production was what revolutionized Europe, the Asiatic mode of production (AMP) was the principal reason for the 'stagnation' of countries like India. So negatively unique did India appear to Marx that he had to invent a specific category, the AMP, to discuss it. Similarly Weber saw in the other-worldly orientations of Asian religions, e.g., Hinduism, the factor unfavourable to the birth of capitalism in the non-western world.⁵

From the above it is thus not very difficult to deduce that the main corpus of classical sociological theories dealt with the 'Rise of the West' and 'stagnation' of the non-western world. Rarely was it asked, in a manner that questions the already 'given' 'Rise of the West' doctrine, why the East did not rise. Or was there really something exceptionally 'positive' in European history and culture which heralded the 'miracle' in the West? More importantly, was the non-western world condemned to be a passive loser in the march of human history because of the AMP, other-worldly religious orientations and its other alleged negative historical-cultural features?

Instead of addressing these central questions in a historical, non-Eurocentric way, what has been predominantly practised in Indian social sciences, including sociology, is a constant comparison of the elements/features of western exceptionalism with the negative uniqueness of the non-western world, without dislodging the former from its self-proclaimed position of historical virtue. With such comparison, the *raison d'être* of methods in anthropology/sociology, there ironically also began the process of cultural 'othering'.

4 This argument is central to A. G. Frank's recent book, written from what he calls a 'globological' perspective. For further details, see his *ReOrient: Global Economy in Asian Age*, Vistaar Publications, New Delhi, 1998.

5 The connection between religious tradition and economic development, usually known as the Weberian thesis, has been a contentious issue in Indian sociology. For details, see T. K. Oommen, *Alien Concepts and South Asian Reality: Responses and Reflections*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1995.

It found its ultimate, as also the ugliest, expression in binaries such as modern vs primitive, dynamic vs stagnant, scientific vs metaphysical, and gentlemen vs gentry. The near-obsession of Indian sociology with caste as an institution perennially locked from inside, a logical expression of the *shastric* injunctions and, above all, the defining feature of Indian social system, ought to be seen in this historical context.⁶

One of the major spin-offs of the European 'miracle' was the emergence of a secular *weltanschauung*. It was premised on the three pillars of utilitarianism, humanism and an empirical-scientific approach to knowledge, dualism being their theme song. Over a period of time this worldview came to be regarded as absolute truth valid for all cultures, their distinct historical trajectories being of no consequence. Indeed it became, by a variety of complex processes, political as well as cultural, *universal*, even though in the beginning it was no more than *provincial* in character. Worldviews different from it were portrayed in two important ways: either as the abject negation of everything that the West and modernity stood for, or as a fragile, irrelevant tradition soon to be wiped out by the inescapable process of modernization.

Apparently, the two approaches seem to be different, even contrary. However, they are not, they emanate from the same premise of modernity. While the former displays dismay over, nay rage against, everything that is not itself, the latter symbolizes the optimism that modernity so enthusiastically nursed from its very inception. In social sciences, Louis Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* and D. Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* respectively serve as examples of the two above-mentioned approaches.

More often than not Indian scholars tend to replicate, partially or otherwise, such theoretical models in studying their own culture, society and history. This renders their task quite easy. They do not have to undergo the painful process of imagining. Neither does it pose any intellectual challenge to them. They simply imitate the prefabricated images already fashioned in the West. Seldom does mimicry achieve the status of the original, however.

Consider, for instance, the proliferation of literature on multiculturalism (MC), the latest from

6 For a theoretically-nuanced critique of such a portrayal of caste system, see Dipankar Gupta, *Interrogating Caste: Understanding Hierarchy and Difference in Indian Society*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2000.

the West which has captivated Indian scholars, particularly political scientists. It seems that in MC political scientists have finally discovered the right antidote to thorny problems such as communalism, minority rights and all that has beset Indian state and society in the recent past. As stated above, this imitation is, to say the least, unchallenging. It ignores the career of MC as a concept and the specific context in which it came to the centre-stage of debate. More importantly, it tends to undermine the significance of our own cultural resources, perhaps far more effective than MC.

I am referring to Indian pluralism, not as a mere reference recorded in the disciplinary history but as a tangible, lived-in historical experience. In Indian civilization, pluralism has flowered and flourished not just in structural, social domains but equally in cultural realm. This has not been the case in a settlement society⁷ like Canada where MC originally developed. The United States and Australia where it gained wide currency are also settlement societies.

Moreover, in settlement societies a policy of monoculturalism was ruthlessly pursued first and only when it did not succeed was MC compulsively adopted as a tool for administrative normalisation.⁸ In India, by contrast, pluralism/difference has since long been a fact as well as a value and ideal. There has been no monoculturalism. Lastly, MC is a guilt-ridden response to the pathology of European Enlightenment which does not appreciate diversity/difference and is hence homogenizing. Now let us turn to sociology.

The dominant discourse in Indian sociology too uncritically resorted to the western worldview, with its concomitant concepts and categories, to explain Indian society. And herein lies its persisting dilemma, a dilemma that the founders of Indian sociology – D P Mukherjee and Radhakamal Mukherjee, among others – strove to grapple with.⁹ They called into question the efficacy of ‘positivistic utilitarian model of the western social science, particularly that

of sociology’¹⁰ to unravel the complex reality of Indian society.

Rejecting the western image of the individual, D P Mukherjee contended that the basic unit of the Indian social system was the *sangha* or community. In a similar vein, Radhakamal Mukherjee questioned the western idea of democracy (premised on individual rationalism) as the sole criterion for democracy. A K. Saran’s position in this regard bordered on nihilism. He regarded sociology as a western ideological package foreign to the Indian ethos.¹¹

Later, Saran renounced sociology altogether. In hindsight it appears, however, that sociology too renounced Saran. He could hardly win more than a few supporters to his creed. But his philosophical criticism against sociology left behind a deep mark. It found its most coherent expression in the idea of a Hindu sociology. The collection of essays edited by McKim Marriott underlined that Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Parsons, Shils were all unable to understand the cultural life of India. Marriott, therefore, argued for Hindu ethnosocial sciences ‘rooted in the categories of specific cultures rather than implanted from alien cultural systems’.¹²

Similar voices were raised vis-à-vis Islamic culture and society. Questioning the relevance of western anthropology in comprehending the life of Muslims, Akbar S. Ahmad passionately called for an Islamic anthropology.¹³ Much like D P Mukherjee, Ahmad too argued that the elemental component of Muslim social structure was *umma* or community, not individual. ‘(T)he aim of Islamic anthropology should be,’ writes Davies, ‘understanding the nature, conditions, meanings and consonance in the study of all mankind in their communal existence’.¹⁴ Terminological differences notwithstanding, D P Mukherjee and Radhakamal Mukherjee on the one hand and Akbar S. Ahmad and M. W. Davies on the other appear to be united in questioning the western worldview and underlining instead the specificity of the respective Hindu and Muslim cultural worldviews.

7 For the distinction between settlement society and civilization, see Ravindra K. Jain, ‘A Civilizational Theory of Indian Diaspora and its Global Implications’, *The Eastern Anthropologist* 50 (3-4), 1997, 347-355.

8 Talal Asad has made an immensely powerful critique of multiculturalism in the context of Britain. See his ‘Multiculturalism and British Identity in the Wake of the Rushdie Affair’, *Politics & Society* 18(4), 1990, 455-480.

9 This section draws on Yogendra Singh’s book. See his *Image of Man: Ideology and Theory in Indian Sociology*, Chanakya Publications, Delhi, 1983, Chapters 2 and 3.

10 Yogendra Singh, op cit, 16.

11 Yogendra Singh, op cit, 85ff.

12 See, McKim Marriott (ed.), *India through Hindu Categories*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1990.

13 See, Akbar S. Ahmad, *Toward Islamic Anthropology: Definition, Dogma and Directions*, Vanguard, Lahore, 1987.

14 M. W. Davies, *Knowing One Another: Shaping an Islamic Anthropology*, Mansell Publishing Ltd., London and New York, 1988, 113.

Three problems can be identified in the above demand for a culture-specific sociology/ anthropology. First, the call to anchor sociology in the concepts and categories of tradition in itself is decisively modern. Without reference to the West, it does not have any autonomous existence of its own. Second, it assumes, perhaps innocently, that traditions or cultures, be they Hindu or Islamic, are 'pure' and 'unblemished'. It thus ignores the far-reaching changes that traditions and cultures have undergone during two centuries of colonial rule. No tradition is, therefore, 'pure' today, it is significantly altered even though claims to the contrary can be made.

Third, with the rise of culture-specific sociology – and logically it does not stop just at Hindu or Islamic sociology – will there be a possibility of dialogue among its practitioners? Is there no connecting thread across cultures even if they are diverse and have different, even counter, conceptions of man, society and universe? Or will it inaugurate the undermining of sociology *qua* sociology?

Irfan Ahmad

University of Amsterdam
The Netherlands

THIS is a response to Surjit Bhalla's piece 'Indian Poverty: ideology and evidence', *Seminar* 497, January 2001. Particularly the diatribe Bhalla has once again launched on the issue of people displaced by large dams in India. That, unlike Arundhati Roy, Bhalla has no sympathy for people facing such calamities is obvious. That he has done it repeatedly, without checking his facts, also shows that there is little point in responding to him. The trouble starts when a highly respected journal like *Seminar* publishes articles that stoop to the level at which Bhalla becomes a psychiatrist and starts recommending psychiatric treatment for those who point out his fallacies or those he doesn't agree with.

In the article, the author claims that 'The India Country Study (ICS) of the World Commission on Dams (WCD) from where Arundhati Roy gets her "ideological" statistics, does not contain any reference to 56 million (as people displaced by large dams in last 50 years)'. One is not sure from where Dr Bhalla got his copy of the ICS, but for the benefit of *Seminar* readers, here is the exact quote from Chapter 5, section 3 entitled 'Social Impacts':

'The total number of large dams constructed or under construction according to the CBIP is 4291. Therefore, as per our calculations, the total area that can be expected to be submerged is 4291 x 8748 ha, which is a whopping 37,53,7668 ha (approximately 37.5 million ha). Based on this, the number of people displaced, using the average of 1.51 persons per ha, would be an astounding 56,681,879 (approximately 56.68 million). However, given the hesitation of the government to make data available, it is the best estimate that can be made. In any case, what it does establish is that the displacement figures cannot be anywhere as low as suggested by some official sources. At best the variation would be of the order of 25%.

'Together, nearly 62% of the population displaced were tribals and members of the scheduled castes. Considering their population nationally is only a little over 24.5%, clearly their representation among those displaced was disproportionately high.'

The trouble with Bhalla is that he seems to have developed a habit of writing on issues and facts that he has no idea about. For example, in his full page masterpiece titled 'Going wrong with figures in a Big Dam way', *Indian Express*, 9 September 1999, he says, 'The SSP project contains one very large dam and 29 other Big Dams'. Anybody who has even minimum knowledge of the subject would know that SSP (Sardar Sarovar Project) is just one project, not 30 dams as Surjit Bhalla believes it to be. Another piece of misinformation that Bhalla spreads through this piece is that the government believes that total number of people to be displaced by SSP is 40,000. The official government estimate of people to be affected by the reservoir alone is 41,000 families, which would, at an average of 5 per family, come to 200,000 people. But can someone who does not understand the difference between persons and families be expected to understand that large dam projects have many other categories of displacement besides reservoir displacement? Canals, colonies, downstream impacts, compensatory measures like catchment area treatment, afforestation and sanctuary, and even rehabilitation schemes lead to additional displacement of people who are uprooted in order to make way for the rehabilitation of the dam oustees.

It is not possible in this brief rejoinder to go into the other the fallacies of his articles. Coming to the issue itself, when we compiled displacement figures of 140 dams for which figures were available, the

figure came to 4,387,625. That is nearly 4.4 million people displaced by just 140 dams. If we were to arrive at an average number of people displaced per dam from this figure and divide that average by three, i.e., assume that the actual figures were 300% higher than the computed average, we still arrive at a figure of over 40 million people displaced by the 4291 large dams in India. And this is only the displacement due to reservoirs. If we add all other categories of displacement connected with large dams, the figure would be much higher.

Interestingly, this is close to the figure of 40 million that the then secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, mentioned in a meeting with non-government organisations in 1998. While Bhalla would like to have us believe that the number of people displaced by dams in India is 5.84 million (1360 persons per dam x 4291 large dams), the Mid Term Appraisal of Ninth Five Year Plan says the figure could be up to 25 million.

But of course the problem with economists like Surjit Bhalla is not just their incompetence with numbers, it is their callous, utterly inhuman attitude towards such problems in our society and towards development itself. That is why the government which, more than any other institution, is responsible for pauperisation of millions in India, has no account of how many people have been displaced and what happened to them. The following is a relevant quote from Mid Term Appraisal of Ninth Five Year Plan: 'Systematic irrigation development and construction of big dams in the country have caused land to be submerged and led to large-scale displacement of people from their original habitat. Almost half of the displaced persons are tribals who have least resources, experience and temperament to negotiate their lives after displacement. There are no reliable statistics with break-up of social and economic classification of the people displaced by each of large projects since Independence' (Planning Commission, October 2000, p. 89).

That is a very chilling thing to say about any society. In the end, one can only hope that a journal like *Seminar* will be careful about publishing articles of such low level in its tone and so full of misinformation.

Himanshu Thakkar

South Asia Network on Dams
Rivers and People (SANDRP)
New Delhi

seminar

Seminar brings you a discussion each month on the problems which agitate all serious people. Subscribe to it today and participate actively in the thinking life of India...

Subscription rates

Period	India	S Asia	Rest of world
1 year	Rs 250	Rs 350	US\$ 50 £ 35
3 years	Rs 700	Rs 900	US\$ 125 £ 80

* Single copy Rs 25 (annual no. Rs 50)

* Add Rs 20 or US\$ 2 or £ 1 on outstation cheques

* Add US\$ 20 or £ 10 for airmail yearly

* Cheque/DD/MO should be made in favour of 'Seminar Publications'

Seminar, F-46, Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi 110001
Tel 3316534 Fax 3316445 E-mail seminar@vsnl.com

We are on the Internet now, please direct your browsers to

www.india-seminar.com

Backpage

IT has been a quarter century since the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India was released. The report, a milestone in our institutional efforts at awareness raising and advocacy, led to a flurry of women-centred programmes, all 'designed' to enhance the status of women. This phase in our history also witnessed a significant escalation in women's participation in all spheres of activity – including in movements for the right to control and manage natural resources, to information, to participation in decisions on development – all of which set the parameters of global debates on these issues.

And yet, as the recently released 'Women in India: How Free? How Equal?' by Kalyani Menon-Sen and A K Shivakumar, UNDP, Delhi 2001, so effectively points out, the gap between rhetoric and reality remains depressingly wide as ever. Nothing expresses this more starkly than the steady decline in the female-male ratio from 955 per 1000 in 1921 to 927 per 1000 in 1991, the last Census. This also implies, assuming 105 women for every 100 men, a proportion reflecting relative equality, that there are close to 25 million women missing in India. 'Some are never born, and the rest die because they do not have the opportunity to survive.' At the start of a new millennium this is nothing to be proud of.

Public interest in depressing statistics is rarely high. More so these days when the shift from a Nehruvian 'controlled' economy to a 'market-oriented' dispensation has ostensibly freed us from the 'Hindu rate of growth' and ushered in the pre-conditions for an era of prosperity. No wonder the excitements in the world of the 'bold and beautiful' generate more attention than the release of reports on crucial concerns, even when well-packaged.

So, are Indian women, fifty years after the adoption of the Constitution, more free and equal? What do freedom and equality mean for women in India? Can they exercise their right to live with dignity? To develop their potential and choose what they want to be? Minimally, are they protected from the major sources of unfreedom – from violence, discrimination, want, fear and injustice? And, how equal are they to men?

The Menon-Sen and Shivakumar exercise is important because their report has made an attempt to unpack the Gender Empowerment Index, to elucidate the circumstances of people's lives which the num-

bers at best only partially capture. Hopefully, though much of this data is known to experts, the report can contribute to a wider debate.

For a start, it is heartening that women can hope to live twice as long now than they did in 1951. Yet, there is a 18 year longevity difference between a woman in Kerala and Madhya Pradesh. This despite little difference in per capita incomes. The figures for gendered infant mortality rates tell the same story – insignificant improvements over time and little reduction in inequalities marked by region, caste and class. Why?

For one, the few disaggregated health statistics we have (and most 'female conditions' are not considered health problems at all) show that women are rarely consulted about their health problems, that there is a huge shortage of women health professionals, particularly in rural areas. Half the women suffer from anaemia and our maternal mortality rates are 100 times what obtains in the West. Over half the couples still do not use contraception, but amniocentesis clinics are flourishing.

The picture in education is no different with half the women still illiterate. (Incidentally, the real jumps in female literacy came in the last decade, from 37% to 50%.) Yet Rajasthan, which introduced major innovative schemes for women – Women's Development Programme, Shiksha Karmi, Lok Jumbish – has seen a growing gap between women and men. And please, this is not just because we are a patriarchal society, but because we refuse to invest sufficiently, and with due regard for quality in education.

The statistics about work are more striking – with most women-centred activities still being classified as non-work (domestic, household). The wage differentials remain huge, and participation in the labour market hazardous. Not that harassment and violence are not experienced at home. We rarely talk about child sexual abuse, or domestic battering. By no means do the invocations to Saraswati or Laxmi run true.

Critics might well argue, 'Why not focus on the positives?' Well, at least partly because of our continuing unwillingness to engage with even the basics. It is good to learn about a Miss World or Universe. It would be better to be told about an improvement in the sex-ratio.

Harsh Sethi

Whats

B.I.G. deal?

Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior – three major cities in Madhya Pradesh offer big possibilities and big opportunities to the IT entrepreneurs.

For IT they are dream sites.

M.P. already has 18000 kilometres of Optical Fibre backbone to be increased to 28000 by March 2001. No other state has such connectivity.

M.P. is known for internationally recognised innovations in e-governance such as Gyandoot.

M.P. has highly trained manpower in IT Sector.

With a liberal, all-open IT Policy and immense scope for newer IT applications for masses Madhya Pradesh welcomes you.

MADHYA PRADESH
MAKE B.I.G YOUR HOME



EICHER 11.10

Salient Features :

- Full Air Brakes : 'S' Cam Roller follower type.
- Strong Chassis Frame : Straight Ladder type (6mm Thick).
- Longer Wheel Base (3800 mm).
- More Loading Space 16 feet (L) x 7 feet (W)
- Heavy Duty Tyres : 7.50 x 20-12 PR.
- 190 litres capacity fuel tank suited for long distance operations.
- 10 Material & Labour free services.
- Available in Cabin & Chassis (CBC), Fixed Side Deck (FSD), Drop Side Deck (DSD) and High Side Deck (HSD) Versions.

**When the going gets tough.
The tough gets going.**

Eicher 11.10 -- A 7 ton payload MCV is one of the toughest in its class. Especially designed to withstand the demanding Indian road conditions, this rugged truck from Eicher stable is ideal for long running operations and no matter what comes, gets the tough going.

EICHER MOTORS LIMITED

Trucks • Buses • Built-up Vehicles

Regd. Office & Works : 102, Industrial Area No. 1, Pithampur-454775, Dist. Dhar (M.P.) Tel. : 07292-53101-4, Fax : 07292-53109, Cable : EICHWORKS
Regional Offices : DELHI : Tel. : 6413751, 6413759, 6449772, CALCUTTA : Tel. : 2296773, 2299429, THANE : Tel. : 5340459, 5342483, 5448166,
CHENNAI : Tel. : 8260856, 8264973, BANGALORE : Tel. : 2271870, 2279129, INDORE : Tel. : 432936, 537207, LUCKNOW : Tel. : 370688, 331688.

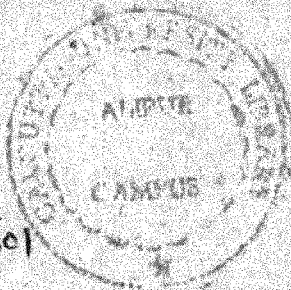
Visit us at : <http://www.eicherworld.com>

Printed and Published by Malvika Singh on behalf of the Romeshraj Trust from Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi and Printed by her at Kapidhvaj Printers, 639, Bawli Street, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055

SEMINAR

india-seminar.com

499 MARCH 2001



WASTELANDS

An abstract graphic featuring a series of white dashed lines that recede into the distance, creating a sense of perspective. The lines are set against a black background, and the overall composition suggests a road or a path leading towards the horizon.



It's not just a new mark. It embodies our commitment. To pursue excellence. To make India more self-reliant. To provide world-class products and services. And above all, to provide a better life. Tata. Improving the quality of life - for consumers, employees, shareholders and millions of people in the community.



HCL Perot Systems
- the Global Software Services provider
from India

We provide World Class Solutions in
System Integration, Business Transformation
and IT Outsourcing

Our industry focus includes Banking and Finance,
Telecommunications, Travel and Airlines

We have a client base in Australia, Germany, Hongkong,
India, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Singapore, Switzerland,
Thailand, UK and USA

Visit us at www.hclperot.com

HCL Perot Systems
A-10-11, Sector 3, Noida - 201 301, U.P., India
Tel: 91-11-8-4547671-74

With Best Compliments

from

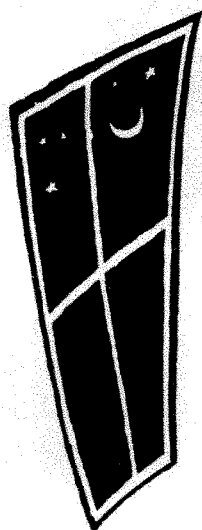


APEEJAY-SURRENDRAGROUP

**Tea, shipping, hotels, steel,
real estate, finance and
international trade**

**Pragati Bhawan, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi 110001
Telephone: 336 1193 Fax: 374 7123**

This is 9 year old Julie.
She's going to grow up to either be
a social worker or a sex worker.
And you're going to decide which.



Take a deep look into Julie's eyes.
What do you see fifteen years
from now ? The caring eyes
of a field nurse or the blank eyes
of a prostitute. The truth is,
it could be either, and it depends
on you. Through Nanhi Kali,
you can become the foster parent
of a little girl like Julie. By giving
Rs. 100 a month towards her
education. Your 'daughter' will be
put into school and in fact, you
will receive regular reports about
her progress including a photograph.
Nanhi Kali is a special project
of the K.C. Mahindra Education
Trust - a trust set up by one
of the most reputed industrial
families in India. A trust that's
been working since 1953 to
promote education and
enlightenment across the country.
Since Nanhi Kali literally means
'little flower', with the help of
people like you, we hope to
repair the broken petals of
thousands of such underprivileged
little girls. So please,
look into Julie's eyes and
make up your mind, now.

Nanhi kali

A project of K. C. Mahindra Education Trust
Cecil Court, Mahakavi Bhushan Marg, Mumbai - 1.
Phone : 2021031 Fax : 2852441.

Created by Contract for a cause.

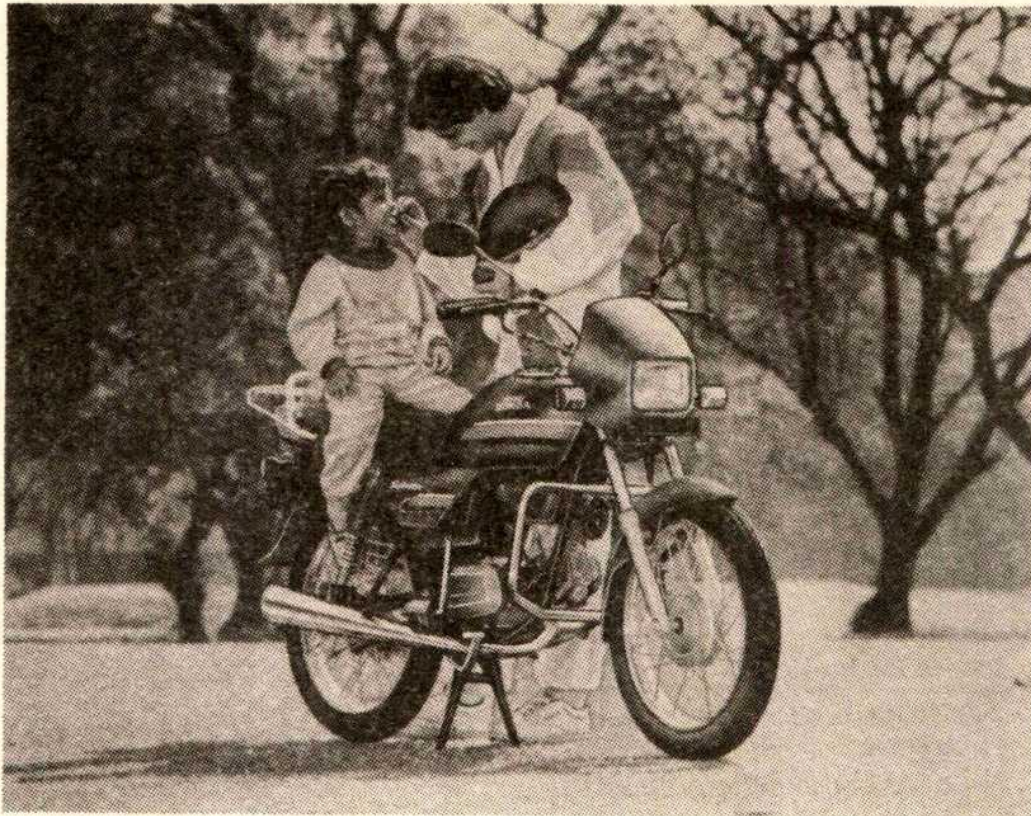


Yes, I, _____ would like to adopt a 'Nanhi Kali' like Julie. ✂ Enclosed is my cheque of Rs. 1200 (@ Rs. 100 p.m.) in favour of K.C. Mahindra Education Trust for one year's education. Please do send me progress reports and a photograph. ✂ Instead of one Nanhi Kali, I would like to adopt _____ Nanhi Kalis for _____ years. Thank you.
• Anonymity of donor is assured. • All donations are exempted under section 80 G of the Income Tax Act.

Ad sponsored by Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.

SEMINAR 499 - March 2001

CARING TODAY FOR YOUR TOMORROW.



Our children, our future, need the utmost care. And at Hero Honda we care. For you, your family and the environment.

Hero Honda's superior 4-stroke technology and its high fuel-efficiency makes it one of India's most environment-friendly motorcycles.

Little wonder, then, that today over three million proud Hero Honda owners are making an impact on our environment across the country. Ensuring a brighter and a pollution-free tomorrow for the future generation.

Ride a Hero Honda. And show the world that you care.



**HERO
HONDA**
Leading the way

Maadhyam/HH/29762x

new **Godrej**
shaving cream
 for a
smoother,
closer shave



NEW
ATTRACTIVE
LAMITUBE

Now with extra lather for a closer shave. And lanolin which makes the razor glide across your skin for a smooth shaving experience

Mullion-G-95s R

Power to the people.



India's
largest selling
and most
exported fan

Ab PSPO kyun nahi jaanta?



ORIENT
PSPO

The measure which the whole world treasures

Mudra : OF : 111

Fab India Overseas Ltd

14, N Block Market, Greater Kailash Part I
New Delhi 110 048

Tel: 6212184, 6212185, 6465497 Main Shop: 6212183
Fabrics: 6445293 N-5 Shop 6445293 N-7 Shop 6212761

10 L.S.C. Nelson Mandela Road
Vasant Kunj
New Delhi 110 070
Tel: 6899775, 6899778

54, 17th Main, IInd Block
Koramangala
Bangalore 560 034
Tel: 5520004, 5532070

RETAIL AND EXPORT OF HOME FURNISHINGS



Ideal for Farm Houses, Golf Courses, Factory
Premises, Campuses & other Institutions.
In fact for any good looking green.

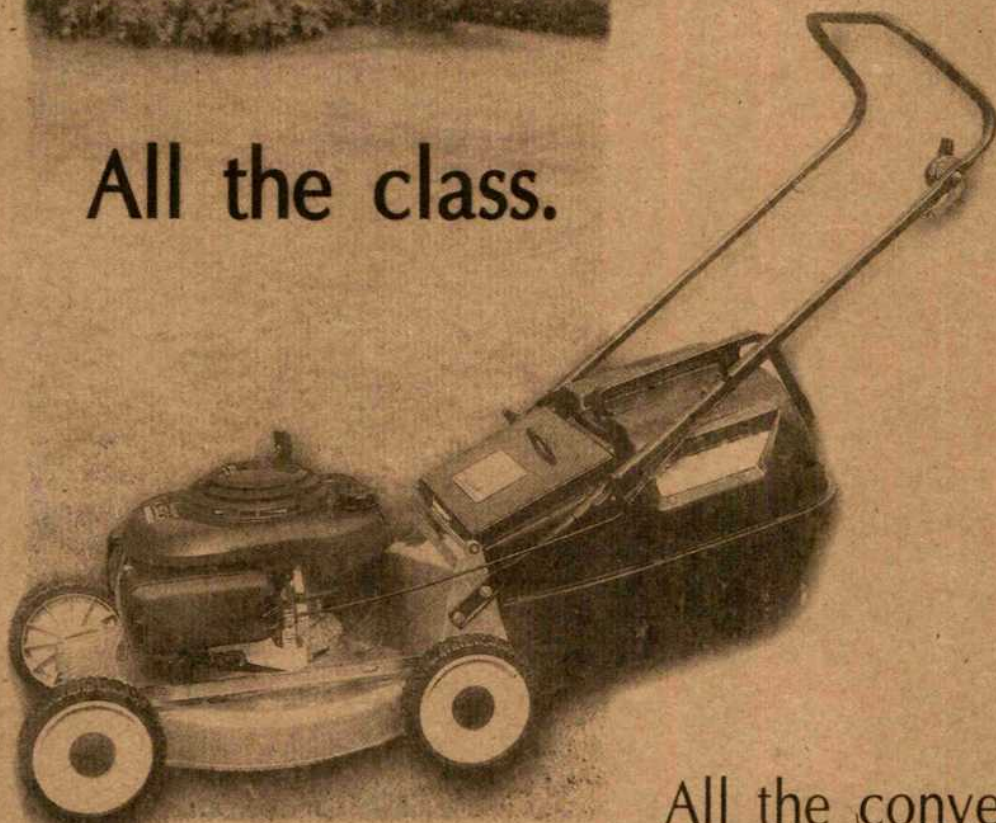
HONDA

presents

THE HRV 195PU

LAWN MOWER

All the class.



All the convenience.

HONDA Mowers are sold and serviced in India,
exclusively by:

HONDA

POWER PRODUCTS

For any other Information, contact : Marketing Department
HONDA SIEL POWER PRODUCTS LTD.
5th Floor, Kirti Mahal, 19 Rajendra Place, New Delhi - 110 008
Phones : (011)- 5739103/04/05, 5723528, 5723718,
Fax : 91 -11 - 5752218, 5753652

Easy starting

Clean breathing

O.H.V. Fuel efficient

engine

CENTUM

seminar

THE MONTHLY SYMPOSIUM POST BOX 338 NEW DELHI 1100

Founder Editors RAJ & ROMESH THAPAR

a journal which seeks to reflect through free discussion, every shade of Indian thought and aspiration. Each month, a single problem is debated by writers belonging to different persuasions. Opinions expressed have ranged from janata to congress, from sarvodaya to communist to independent. And

the non-political specialist too has voiced his views. In this way it has been possible to answer a real need of today: to gather the facts and ideas of this age and to help the people arrive at a certain degree of cohesion and confidence in facing the problems of economics, of politics, of culture.

publisher MALVIKA SINGH

editor TEJBIR SINGH

consulting editor HARSH SETHI

circulation N.K. J

F-46 Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi-110001; Ph 3316534; Fax 3316445; E-mail seminar@vsnl.com; Website www.india-seminar.com
Single copy: Rs25 Yearly: Rs250; £35; \$50 Three year: Rs700; £80; \$125 Reproduction of material prohibited unless per

NEXT MONTH: DILEMMAS THROUGH THE DECADE

499

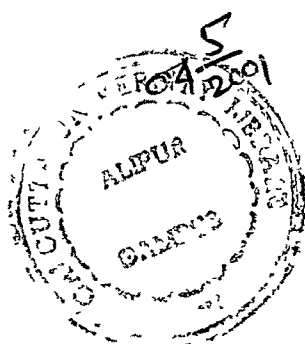
WASTELANDS

a symposium on

regenerating our

degraded land resources

symposium participants



- 12 **THE PROBLEM**
Posed by **V B Eswaran** Chairman, The Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development, Delhi
- 18 **REHABILITATING DEGRADED LANDS**
N C Saxena IAS, Secretary, Planning Commission, Government of India
- 24 **WASTELANDS AND COMMON PROPERTY LAND RESOURCES**
Kanchan Chopra Professor, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi
- 32 **EMPOWERING AGRARIAN SOCIETY**
Ajay S Mehta General Secretary, Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development, Delhi
- 34 **COMMUNITY CONTROL**
S R Hiremath Coordinator, Samaj Parivartana Samudaya, and President, National Committee for Protection of Natural Resources, Dharwad, Karnataka
- 40 **ECONOMIC POTENTIAL**
M V Nadkarni Vice Chancellor, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga, was earlier Professor and Head of the Ecological Economics Unit, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore
- 45 **THE GUJARAT EXPERIENCE**
Sudarshan Iyengar, Director, Gujarat Institute of Development Research, Ahmedabad
- 50 **ON SIGHT – AND INSIGHT**
Mohan Kanda IAS, Additional Secretary, Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, GOI, Delhi
- 57 **BOOKS**
Reviewed by **Ashwini Chhatre**, **Seema Bhatt**, **Hrinmay Dhar**, **Ratna M. Sudarshan** and **Sailendra Nath Ghosh**
- 67 **FURTHER READING**
Compiled by **The Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development**, Delhi
- 71 **COMMENTS**
Received from **Sailendra Nath Ghosh**, environmentalist, Delhi; **K S Dhillon**, former Director General of Police, Punjab; and **Prema Gopalan**, Director, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, Mumbai
- 79 **IN MEMORIAM**
Indrajit Gupta 1919-2001
- 83 **COMMUNICATIONS**
Received from **R P Singh**, Assistant Professor, Government College, L B Nagar, Chhatisgarh; and **Ashutosh Kumar**, Department of Political Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh
- 86 **BACKPAGE**
COVER
Designed by **Akila Seshasayee**

The problem

THE late B B Vohra drew the attention of policy-makers in government in the 1970s to the absence of a well-considered approach to issues relevant to the proper management of the land resources of the country. The National Commission on Agriculture also dealt with this matter. Some years later, a group of concerned persons felt that an organization should be created, 'outside' the government, which would particularly concern itself with 'wastelands'.

Thus was born the Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD) in April 1982. Surprisingly, the funds needed to see SPWD through its infancy did not come from government, but from the Ford Foundation, a private U S charity. All credit should go to the latter for stepping in to support the SPWD initiative in uncharted lands.

The Ministry of Agriculture estimated that 175 mha of the land area of the country were wastelands. This estimate suffered from the error of overlapping wasteland categories. D R Bhumbla who was Executive Director of SPWD in its early years was a distinguished soil scientist. With Arvind Khare, a professional in SPWD, he provided the first comprehensive estimate of the different categories of wastelands outside the forest areas in each state (published in 1984). This figure came to a total of 93.69 mha (Tables 1 and 2).

The classification was based on soil types and on ecological qualities such as salinity, alkalinity, water erosion, wind erosion, water-logging and so on. Instead of economic criteria the focus was on ecological instability, loss of topsoil and toxicity in the root zones. They noted two shortcomings in the conventional productivity-linked definitions used by the agriculture ministry in arriving at its total of 175 mha wastelands. Productivity depends on the availability and utilisation of technology at a point in time, and second, this test usually ignores ecological considerations. The Bhumbla-Khare estimate has held the field for years.

As a result of the efforts made by concerned persons, the government set up the National Wastelands Development Board (NWDB) in 1985 with Kamla Chowdhry as chairperson. The Board set up a technical group which in 1986 standardized the definition of wastelands, essential to secure uniformity of the database. The following definition was adopted. Waste-

lands refer to degraded lands which can be brought under vegetative cover with reasonable effort and which is currently lying under-utilized, and land which is deteriorating for lack of appropriate water and soil management or on account of natural causes.

This definition is generally considered satisfactory since it refers to the ecological factors underlying the erosion of land as also identifies the economic approach to deal with the problem. However, many other researchers and agencies have defined wasteland categories, and their utility for planning measures for their reclamation. They have also produced estimates of wasteland areas, as may be seen in Table 3. Refinements of the definition have also received attention of the government. The one used by the March 2000 *Wastelands Atlas of India* prepared by the National Remote Sensing Agency for the Department of Land Resources states: 'Degraded land which can be brought under vegetative cover with reasonable effort, and which is currently under-utilized and land which is deteriorating for lack of appropriate water and soil management or on account of natural causes. Wastelands can result from inherent/imposed disabilities such as by location, environment, chemical and physical properties of the soil or financial or management constraints'.

Within this broad definition the Atlas lists 13 categories of wastelands: gullied land and ravines, land with or without scrub, waterlogged and marshy land, land affected by salinity/alkalinity-coastal/inland, shifting cultivation area, underutilised degraded notified forest land, degraded pastures/grazing land, degraded land under plantation crop, sands – inland/coastal, mining industrial wastelands, barren rocky/stony waste/sheet rock area, steep sloping area, snow covered and/or glacial area.

The Atlas shows about 63.85 mha of total wasteland area (including 14.06 mha of degraded notified forest lands), i.e., 20% of the geographical area covered in the exercise, excluding 12 mha of J&K (Tables 4 and 5). It also gives a breakdown of this total area by the districts in 25 states and in 20 union territory districts.

No estimate has so far indicated the number of people who live in the different categories of wastelands or how they use them, and its relevance for sustainability. This is a serious shortcoming. The Atlas

itself, in the introduction, recognizes the increasing pressure of population and the excessive demand for more land, both for agriculture and for non-agricultural uses, which has resulted in the creation of vast stretches of wastelands. It has also been seen as leading to ecological imbalances. On the other hand, for the purpose of reclaiming wastelands, it does help to know the kind of degradation which has happened and its causes. But, because people live off the land resources, reclamation programmes cannot be merely technical, ignoring socio-economic considerations.

The 1995 report of the high level committee on wastelands development (the Mohan Daria Committee) analysed the land use statistics available for 305 million ha out of the 329 mha land area of the country, and noted that there was much confusion regarding the extent of wastelands. In the committee's view confusion arose from differing definitions of wastelands used by various agencies, also because these agencies failed to distinguish between lands which had gone out of productive use because of extreme degradation and lands which were still in use although these too were degraded to some extent. The latter it preferred to describe as 'degraded lands'.

In the committee's view, the need of the hour was not to get lost in efforts to determine the extent of wastelands and their precise locations, but to recognize that lands subject to erosion (around 150 mha in its estimate) constitute the biggest threat to the country's economy. Not only do these lands suffer increasing loss of productivity with progressive loss of topsoil, but they contribute to the loss of a great deal of priceless sweet water through excessive runoff around denuded slopes, carrying soil with it. The Daria Committee used 175 mha as its estimate of wastelands (degraded lands).

This estimate seems to have ignored the lands affected by salinity and alkalinity noted by Bhumbra and Khare. Such lands are significant in the Gangetic plains, western coastal tracts, and in the irrigation commands in the large projects of the last three decades, mainly because of drainage congestion. These lands can be returned to substantial productivity levels with appropriate technical inputs and financial investment. Equally, the single-crop lands in the Sundarbans can be treated to produce a second crop with appropriate technology and agronomic practices. It is important not to ignore such lands when considering wastelands

reclamation policies because very large numbers of rural people depend on them for their livelihoods.

This consideration needs to be kept in mind while discussing wastelands and their reclamation for productive uses. The technology chosen must subserve the primary objective of stabilizing and enhancing the productive potential of wastelands for sustaining local people's livelihoods. This is important because food and employment security from the land resources cannot as yet be substituted by off-farm occupations to any significant extent in these densely populated areas, given the present status of economic development.

When the NWDB was set up in 1985, the then prime minister thought it possible to reclaim about 5 mha every year. Without going into the details about the basis on which he was given that figure, one may say that it was wholly unrealistic, as proved by subsequent experience. A major feature of the work of the NWDB in its initial years was the concentration on tree plantation as the key reclamation activity, a legacy from 'social forestry' years following the 1976 Report

TABLE 1

States/UTs	Estimate of Wastelands in India (non-forest area only)			
	Saline & Alkaline Lands	Wind Eroded Area	Water Eroded Area	Total (hectares in lacs)
Andhra Pradesh	2.40	—	74.42	76.82
Assam	—	—	9.35	9.35
Bihar	0.04	—	38.92	38.96
Gujarat	12.14	7.04	52.35	71.53
Haryana	5.26	15.99	2.76	24.01
Himachal Pradesh	—	—	14.24	14.24
Jammu & Kashmir	—	—	5.31	5.31
Karnataka	4.04	—	67.18	71.22
Kerala	0.16	—	10.37	10.53
Madhya Pradesh	2.42	—	127.05	129.47
Maharashtra	5.34	—	110.26	115.60
Manipur	—	—	0.14	0.14
Meghalaya	—	—	8.15	8.15
Nagaland	—	—	5.08	5.08
Orissa	4.04	—	27.53	31.57
Punjab	6.88	—	4.63	11.51
Rajasthan	7.28	106.23	66.59	180.01
Sikkim	—	—	1.31	1.31
Tamil Nadu	0.04	—	33.88	33.92
Tripura	—	—	1.08	1.08
Uttar Pradesh	12.95	—	53.40	66.35
West Bengal	8.50	—	13.27	21.77
UTs	0.16	—	8.73	8.89
Total	71.65	129.26	736.00	936.91

TABLE 2

Estimate of Wastelands According to Land-use Categories (non-forest)						
States/UTs	Barren & Unculturable	P&G	CW	Fallows other than CF	(in lacs hectares) Current Fallows	Net Area Sown
Andhra Pradesh	2.40	9.48	8.88	10.53	11.17	34.36
Assam	—	1.85	1.30	1.22	0.54	4.44
Bihar	0.04	1.44	4.68	9.24	8.09	15.49
Gujarat	12.14	8.05	20.02	4.14	2.43	24.17
Haryana	5.26	0.51	0.36	—	0.35	1.98
Himachal Pradesh	—	10.24	1.36	0.04	0.24	2.36
Jammu & Kashmir	—	1.24	1.49	0.08	0.43	2.07
Karnataka	4.04	13.98	5.30	6.25	4.83	36.82
Kerala	0.16	0.06	1.23	0.27	0.21	8.60
Madhya Pradesh	2.42	28.77	18.49	9.33	4.29	66.17
Maharashtra	5.34	15.92	10.21	8.43	4.06	71.64
Mizoram	—	—	—	—	—	0.14
Meghalaya	—	0.17	4.55	2.61	0.25	0.57
Nagaland	—	—	—	4.26	0.42	0.40
Orissa	4.04	5.34	2.60	1.38	2.65	15.56
Punjab	6.88	0.03	0.48	—	0.27	3.85
Rajasthan	7.28	18.34	68.82	21.18	9.69	35.94
Sikkim	—	1.03	0.01	0.01	—	0.26
Tamil Nadu	0.04	1.61	3.62	4.48	6.33	17.84
Tripura	—	—	0.02	0.02	0.01	1.03
Uttar Pradesh	12.95	2.98	13.38	6.07	4.66	26.31
West Bengal	8.50	—	—	2.12	—	11.15
UTs	0.16	0.14	2.68	3.81	1.04	1.06
Total	71.65	121.63	169.48	95.47	61.96	382.16

of the National Commission on Agriculture. Possibly because of the 'social forestry', wastelands development and the NWDB were placed in the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), and the states followed suit.

The emphasis on 'social forestry' was predicated on the understanding in official circles that all local people needed was fuelwood, fodder and small timber. Those who had underutilized or unused lands were encouraged to take up 'farm forestry', which did well in terms of areas covered, according to official statistics. But the same could not be said of the reclamation efforts in common lands in the official programmes. Far too often the choice of tree species was restricted to quick-growing and non-browsable varieties, irrespective of the extent to which these species could meet local needs of various kinds of biomass. The official programmes by and large ignored the value of shrubs, bushes and grasses. There was no attempt to evoke the interest and participation of local communities when social forestry was taken up in common lands.

The NWDB realized this lack and in 1989-90 re-framed its approach to incorporate community par-

ticipation in its work. Around the same time, in the MoEF, serious consideration was being given to introducing a new paradigm — of joint management of forests with the local communities as partners of the forest department. In a somewhat similar vein, the Ministry of Agriculture launched the National Watershed Development Programme in rainfed areas, which called for the participation of farmers. At local levels, non-government organizations in many parts of the country had already been working on reclaiming degraded lands with the involvement of the communities and with due regard to the importance of restoring the health of water regimes. SPWD was a pioneer in this field and supported many NGO partners in their efforts to reclaim degraded lands and water regimes, and in the process to design and implement innovation techniques and methods.

One of the important lessons from the field has been that it is more or less irrelevant to find a label

to fit local wastelands into one of the other categories defined by experts. What is important is to understand the local causes of degradation of the land and water.

TABLE 3

Various Estimates of Wastelands		
Source	Area (mha)	Estimated/Scientific
National Commission on Agriculture (NCA-1976)	175.00	E
Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation	38.40	E
Ministry of Agriculture (1982)	175.00	E
Department of Environment and Forests (B. B. Vohra)	95.00	E
National Wasteland Development Board (Ministry of Environment and Forests, 1985)	123.00	E
National Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning (ICAR-1994)	187.00	E
Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development (SPWD-1984)	129.58	E
National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA-1995)	75.50	S
Dr. N. C. Saxena (Secy. RD-WD)	125.00	E

regimes in the areas subject to the natural processes of erosion and other causes. Equally important is the understanding of the impacts of the degradation on the livelihoods of different sections of local people – whether they own any land or otherwise depend on what the common property resources produce and on agricultural or other labour for wages

Unless these aspects are studied and understood by the external agency (a government department or an NGO), its intervention, however well-intentioned, will not create a stake in the reclamation work for the community as a whole, and post-project maintenance and sustainable management will suffer, as will equity. This has been the experience in numerous reclamation and development projects in many parts of the country. In other words, reclamation of degraded land and water regimes is not just a technical matter

This point needs to be strongly emphasized for far too often external intervention, particularly by a government agency, is planned on just technology, it is assumed that the agency is writing on a clean slate, ignoring how the land and water were used and by whom and for what purposes. An extreme case is the view often advanced by some scientists that the government should by law prescribe how different classes of land ought to be used. Such rigidities often creep into the technical plans made for watershed development for instance, usually resulting in failure to secure substantive interest and participation and in less than cost-effective ways

Watershed development at the small local level is one way of arresting degradation of land and water. It is certainly a good and efficient option, but in many places local conditions can be treated without the A

to Z of strictly technical methods. Unfortunately, government programmes under the Rural Development Ministry's Common Guidelines for Watershed Development – certainly a remarkable and commendable initiative – do not explicitly allow for innovations which may be locally appropriate and more cost-effective. It would be very desirable for the ministry, which provides funds tied to the common guidelines, to consider some kind of 'venture' funding to encourage alternatives which would be technically appropriate and less cost-intensive

It is often thought that technology is neutral to equity, that technological choices cannot promote equity. This is not so. For instance, in plantation of green cover on lands subject to erosion to slow down runoff of rain water, it is possible to choose the species of trees, shrubs and grasses to ensure that sections of local people who depend on biomass from the common lands do get significant quantities of the specific biomass which they need. Again, it is possible to plan and build structures on streams along their courses so as to provide better moisture to lands alongside the upper reaches, which are usually with the poorer sections

TABLE 4

State-wise Wastelands of India				
State	No. of Dists Covered	Total Geog Area of Dists Covered	(Area in sq kms)	
			Total WL Area in Dists Covered	% to Total Geog Area
Andhra Pradesh	23	275068.00	51750.19	18.81
Arunachal Pradesh	13	83743.00	18326.25	21.88
Assam	23	78438.00	20019.17	25.52
Bihar	55	173877.00	20997.55	12.08
Goa	2	3702.00	613.27	16.57
Gujarat	25	196024.00	43021.28	21.95
Haryana	19	44212.00	3733.98	8.45
Himachal Pradesh	12	55673.00	31659.00	56.87
Jammu & Kashmir	14	101387.00	65444.24	64.55
Karnataka	27	191791.00	20839.28	10.87
Kerala	14	38863.00	1448.18	3.73
Madhya Pradesh	62	443446.00	69713.75	15.72
Maharashtra	32	307690.00	53489.08	17.38
Manipur	9	22327.00	12948.62	58.00
Meghalaya	7	22429.00	9904.38	44.16
Mizoram	3	21081.00	4071.68	19.31
Nagaland	7	16579.00	8404.10	50.69
Orissa	30	155707.00	21341.71	13.71
Punjab	17	50362.00	2228.40	4.42
Rajasthan	32	342239.00	105639.11	30.87
Sikkim	4	7096.00	3569.58	50.30
Tripura	4	10486.00	1276.03	12.17
Tamil Nadu	29	130058.00	23013.90	17.70
Uttar Pradesh	83	294411.00	38772.80	13.17
West Bengal	18	88752.00	5718.48	6.44
Union Territory	20	10973.00	574.30	5.23
Total	584	3166414.00	638518.31	20.17
* Unsurveyed Area (J&K)		120849.00		
Total Geo Area		3287263.00		

Source: 1:50000 scale wasteland maps prepared from Landsat Thematic Mapper/IRS LISS II/III Data

TABLE 5

Category-wise Wastelands of India		
Category	(Area in sq kms)	
	Total Waste-lands	% to Total Geographical Area Covered
Gullied and/or Ravinous land	20553.35	0.65
Land with or without scrub	194014.29	6.13
Waterlogged and Marshy land	16568.45	0.52
Land affected by salinity/alkalinity-coastal/inland	20477.38	0.65
Shifting Cultivation Area	35142.20	1.11
Under utilised/degraded notified forest land	140652.31	4.44
Degraded pastures/grazing land	25978.91	0.82
Degraded land under plantation crop	5828.09	0.18
Sands-Inland/Coastal	50021.65	1.58
Mining/Industrial wastelands	1252.13	0.04
Barren rocky/stony waste/sheet rock area	64584.77	2.04
Steep sloping area	7656.29	0.24
Snow covered and/or glacial area	55788.49	1.76
Total Wasteland Area	638518.31	20.17

Source: 1:50000 scale wasteland maps prepared from Landsat Thematic Mapper/IRS LISS II/III Data

Note: 1,20,849.00 sq kms in Jammu & Kashmir is not mapped and hence not considered for calculating the percentage

of farmers. The point is that equity considerations should be always kept in mind while designing the technical parts of a land treatment plan. For every component of it the question should be: Who will gain and who will lose?

Apart from the above, since local people are expected to contribute towards the cost of a treatment plan, it becomes important to keep the investment cost as low as possible. To the extent that this is achieved, government funds for wasteland reclamation and watershed development programmes would go a longer way.

For the landless and the small and marginal farmers, specially in the semi-arid and arid regions of the country, the common lands are the source of a number of biomass materials which they use for fuel, fodder, medicines and a variety of products which they use for their handicraft (baskets, mats, brooms). N. S. Jodha has in his seminal studies noted the degradation of the common lands over the decades and the consequent

diminution of the availability of the varieties and quantities of biomass which the poor used. It is critical that the link between the fragile common lands and local livelihoods is kept in mind while planning and implementing wasteland reclamation through watershed development or other methods.

There are no definitive official estimates of common property resources (CPR) in India. Rights to CPRs may be ownership or user rights or both. Secondary data do not help to capture these fully. One attempt to identify CPRs by G. K. Kadekodi and Aslam Perwaiz (1998) may be seen in Table 6. Their figures for CPRs in the different states may be seen in Table 7. Vasundhara, published by the Department of Land Resources in the Ministry of Rural Development, has cited these figures.

These figures would be off the mark to the extent there are encroachments in CPRs, a fact of life in most states. The official machinery is usually lackadaisical in removing encroachments from CPRs. However, in many local situations, people have managed to persuade or pressurize the encroachers to pull out of the CPRs, usually for the purpose of developing them to produce fuelwood and fodder of which they feel acute shortages.

One of the causes of degradation of common property resources has been that access to them is open, anyone from the village or from neighbouring villages uses them without any kind of site-specific regulation by the community itself. This is a problem which is not practical to regulate by externally imposed rules. Decades ago, local communities had evolved their own rules which were followed by common consent. Robert Wade documented, for instance, what was done in villages which he studied in Andhra Pradesh. Similarly,

TABLE 6

Identification of Common Property Resources			
Classification of Land	Included in CPR	Source of Sanction for Access (as assumed in the estimation)	
Net Sown Area	No	On uncultivated owned land limited user rights	
Current Fallow	No	On uncultivated owned land limited user rights	
Fallow other than Current	Yes	User rights by convention	
Cultivable waste	Yes	Partial user rights by convention	
Pastures and other grazing land	Yes	User rights by law	
Barren and uncultivable land	May be included	No access	
Area put to non-agricultural use	No	No access	
Forest Area			
1 Reserved	No	No access	
2 Protected	Partial	Partial user rights	
3 Unclassed	Yes	User rights by law	

TABLE 7

Common Property Land Resources in 1990-91 Period							
State	Non-forest Areas					(in thousand hectares)	
	PLCPR	PPG	CWL	OTHFL	TOTNFCPR (2+3+4+5)	Forest CPR ^a PROT+ UNCL	Total CPR (6+7)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Andhra Pradesh	1953	843	780	1377	4953	1333	6286
Assam	366	184	104	84	738	1246	1984
Bihar	1433	126	372	999	2930	2418	5348
Gujarat	0	849	1920	60	2829	557	3386
Haryana	0	23	21	0	44	143	187
Himachal Pradesh	392	1136	125	15	1668	3351	5019
Jammu & Kashmir	182	127	138	6	453	72	525
Karnataka	649	1098	446	457	2650	1011	3661
Kerala	0	2	95	27	124	0	124
Madhya Pradesh	1790	2734	1579	826	6929	7180	14109
Maharashtra	2120	1519	1028	983	5650	1546	7196
Meghalaya	39	17 ¹	493	167	716	16	732
Nagaland	662	0 ^a	99	110	871	0	871
Orissa	0	726	597	214	1537	3010	4547
Punjab	0	10	35	28	73	286	359
Rajasthan	2779	1912	5567	1927	12185	2011	14196
Tamil Nadu	627	124	290	1044	2085	314	2399
Tripura	39	0 ^a	1	1	41	270	311
Uttar Pradesh	0	303	1034	884	2221	466	2687
West Bengal	0	7	106	51	164	482	646
Total	13031	11740	14830	9260	48861	25712	74573

Definitions PLCPR – Private lands to which common access may exist, CWL – Culturable wastelands, PPG – Permanent pastures and grazing lands OTHFL – Other than current fallow PROT + UNCL – Protected and unclassified forest lands, TOTNFCPR – PLCPR + CWL + PPG + OTHFL (total non-forest common property land resources)

Arun Agarwal has examined regulations made and followed in the past by villages in West Rajasthan

Even today, as result of efforts made by NGOs in many places, communities have evolved their own local norms and rules for the use of grazing lands and forest areas which they protect. These are generally more effective than injunctions and prohibitions ordered by a government authority, though for a number of reasons there is sometimes a breakdown of the local system. Even in such cases the repair job done by local people is more effective than intervention by an external authority. There is a school of thought which feels that the open access to common property resources cannot be remedied except by an external regulatory authority, but our experience in the country proves otherwise.

Can anything be done to help the young people in the villages to be more conscious and caring towards their local land, water and forest environment? It is clear that this is necessary, and can best be done in the

course of the educational process in schools and colleges. It would be good to catch them young, as the Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi of Almora has demonstrated through the use of work books introduced into the school system which enable teachers and pupils to relate, in a quantitative way, what the local environments produce for people for their daily lives. In Unicef, subsequent to the Rio Summit, Primary Environmental Care (PEC) was proposed as a concept and practice to educate children. Unfortunately, not much headway has been made, if one looks at schools in villages and small towns across the country.

For the future, it is necessary that we continue to refine our understanding of the causes of degradation of our land resources, and of the deterioration of local water regimes which are critical for the productivity of our land resources. After all these natural resource endowments provide the sustenance for human and livestock populations, contributing a very substantial proportion to our national income. Fifty years ago our land resource per capita was

just under one hectare, while now we have only less than one-third of that figure. We cannot therefore, as a country, afford to live with further degradation of our natural resources.

On the contrary it is imperative that the government and the users of those resources do everything possible to reverse the loss of productivity caused by past degradation. In order to do this sustainably, the problem cannot be considered just as a question of technology. Rather the informed involvement of the users – the farmers, the herdsmen, the forest dwellers – has to be secured in whatever measures are devised and best suited to local conditions. Civil society organisations have a crucial role to play in these efforts and processes, and must be allowed full scope to do so, though the legal framework has placed the governments (specially in the states) in an overarching authoritative position.

V B ESWARAN

Rehabilitating degraded lands

N C SAXENA

MORE than two-thirds of India's population is dependant on land. It is significant that this percentage has remained almost unchanged in the last 80 years. The reason is not far to seek. Employment generation in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy is unable to absorb even the additional urban labour force. Therefore, scope for the rural work force finding meaningful employment in the urban sector is severely limited.

With an increasing capital output ratio, the income elasticity of employment in the non-agricultural sector keeps declining, making it more difficult for the urban sector to absorb the extra manpower that is intended to be released from land.

During the last three decades three programmes have been tried on a large scale to help alleviate rural poverty—land reforms, the Integrated Rural Development Programme (focusing on self-employment in the non-agricultural sector) and wage employment programmes. These were not generally targeted to improve productivity of marginal lands in rainfed areas and, therefore, did not show a sustained increase in rural incomes. On the other hand, due to soil and water run-off, the health of the two most important resources in rural India—land and water—has fast declined. This paper traces the background of the present approach to wasteland development, and suggests some measures to improve the sustainability of the current programme.

According to the nine-fold land classification, out of 304 million hec-

* The views expressed are personal and do not bind the organisation for which the author works or has worked in the past.

tares of land in India for which records are available, roughly 40 million hectares are considered totally unfit for vegetation. It is either urban and under other non-agricultural uses such as roads and rivers, or is under permanent snow, rocks and deserts. The break-up of the remaining 264 million hectares of land that is fit for vegetation is as follows

	<i>Million Hectares</i>
Cultivated land	142
Forest land	67
Fallows/culturable wastes/ pastures/groves	55
Total area of culturable lands	264

The above land use classification, however, does not say anything about the extent of land degradation or loss in productivity over time due to various natural and man-made causes. Not only are culturable wastes and pastures considered highly degraded – that is, producing biomass much below their potential – even a substantial part of cultivated and forest lands have lost their productivity due to inappropriate land use and over-exploitation.

The National Commission on Agriculture estimated that 175 million ha of land was under some form of degradation and was in need of attention. According to the commission, all rainfed paddy lands in the country were subject to water and wind erosion and thus in the 175 million ha the commission included 85 mha of cultivated land too, of the remaining 90 mha there would be (35 mha) of degraded and barren forest lands and the rest 55 mha would constitute common and revenue lands.

A vital piece of information about non-forest wastelands pertains to its ownership. There are three obvious categories: private, community and government. In addition to unculti-

vated lands which were historically part of the farmers' holding, especially in ryotwari semi-arid areas, many poor families have been allotted some 6 mha of wastelands under various programmes over the last 20 years. Thus, substantial culturable waste area has been privatised as a conscious policy outcome, although such lands may still be lying uncultivated. Besides, there are encroachments, mostly unrecorded.

A large part of this land may be suitable for growing grasses, shrubs or trees, but not crops. The same is true of government wastes that are owned by the government but used by the community, and grazing lands which are generally vested in village bodies. There is little *de facto* distinction between the two categories, as both are used for grazing and are generally quite degraded. These are also referred to as common or village lands. There is much regional variation as well as variation between neighbouring villages. In villages of intensive cultivation, common lands are of marginal importance, but in hilly and unirrigated villages common lands still offer livelihood possibilities for the poor.

Village lands have generally been a victim of the 'tragedy of the commons' phenomenon where they are exploited by all, without anyone considering himself responsible for maintenance. A *laissez faire* policy was followed by the government with respect to these lands. Neither were any funds allocated for them, nor was any specific government department made responsible for grasses and pasture development. As these lands could not meet peoples' needs, the biotic pressure on forests increased, leading to degradation of forests too.

By the mid-seventies it became evident that if peoples' demands for

fuelwood and fodder were not met, it would be impossible to even save productive forests. This was then sought to be achieved through a programme of social forestry on village and private lands. The philosophy around afforestation of common lands in the social forestry programme was that these lands were to be brought under the forest department's control, in the hope that the trees would be later handed over to the village communities for protection and management.

However, the forest department (FD) could not look after small patches scattered over hundreds of villages in a district, creating enormous problems of protection leading to high mortality. The continued involvement of FD in the initial years discouraged local bodies from taking over, as a result extending FD management. Besides, government failed to define, establish and publicise the rights of the people to the trees and the procedures for marketing and allocating benefits. The shares that would accrue to the individuals, village, panchayat and FD were not clearly laid down. Insecurity about benefits led to indifference on behalf of the people.

Thus, in perspective it appears that the two policies on wastelands – the land distribution policy of the 1970s and the social forestry of the 1980s – seem to have been influenced by Hardin's ideas that there are only two sustainable solutions: either the commons should be privatised, or they should be brought under the control of a coercive state authority. A third model, of community control over commons and over the programme for their regeneration, was not given any thought in these models. As discussed later in this paper, the experience of the last 10 years shows that community control is the only

option that generates sustained benefits, both social and private

In 1985, the Government of India set up a National Wastelands Development Board to promote peoples' participation in afforestation programmes and to regenerate the health of India's wastelands. A target of afforestation of 5 million hectares a year was set up for the board. Later, a Department of Wastelands Development was created in 1992. New structures, however, did not mean new policies. The same old approach of bringing lands under government domain continued.

The Department of Wastelands Development, while issuing sanctions, insisted that the government agency involved with plantations should have complete control over lands where trees were planted. Even for farm lands, the guidelines stipulated that the executing agency produce a certificate from land owners that they had authorised the agency to execute works on their lands. Thus the people, whether on public wastelands or on their own lands, were supposed to be mere spectators; they had no role in planning or execution of the programme.

Second, the problem of degeneration of village wastelands was seen as arising from peoples' demand for fuelwood and fodder resulting in lack of tree cover. Therefore, the programme concentrated on production of fuelwood. Actually the loss of soil from such lands was linked more to lack of control of run-off of rainwater. It was not so much a demand problem as that of land management, especially common lands.

Without controlling run-off it was not possible to stabilise water regimes even for crop lands, and it was a mistake to look at the degradation of common lands in isolation to the other

issues of low productivity of crop lands in rainfed areas. Thus, it was difficult to rehabilitate degraded lands without introducing moisture conservation and water harvesting measures. Such measures are needed for all rainfed areas put to biomass production.

The main thrust of the programmes should have been on activities relating to soil conservation, land shaping and development, pasture development, and water resources conservation for the entire watershed, not merely afforestation on wastelands. Even when such schemes were undertaken by the agriculture department, these remained departmental in approach with no involvement of the people. Maintenance of the created assets suffered, as beneficiaries were not motivated to assume responsibility for maintenance. Besides, these were implemented in an isolated and segmented manner and watershed as a unit of area development was totally lost sight of.

It is estimated that up to the end of the Eighth Plan about 16.5 mha rainfed/degraded land had been treated/developed. However, these achievements are not reflected in the data for net sown area, which has remained almost stagnant at around 142 mha for the last thirty years. This indicates that either the treated lands were already under cultivation or an equal area is getting degraded or diverted for non agriculture purposes. The possibility of bogus reporting also cannot be ruled out.

The 1999 Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General states that despite spending Rs 2195 crore on the Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) between 1973 and 1995 the drought prone area increased from 55.3 mha to 74.6 mha in the same period. There was insufficient evaluation of the quality of works and even

run-offs not measured, with the result that survival rate of plantations was very low, and structures to promote water and soil conservation were not maintained.

The evaluation reports have shown that watershed development programmes cannot succeed without full participation of project beneficiaries and careful attention to issues of social organisation. This is because success depends on consensus among a large number of users. The costs and benefits of watershed interventions are location-specific and unevenly distributed among the people affected. Moreover, collective capability is required for management of commons and for new structures created during the project.

These shortcomings were taken care of, at least on paper, with the acceptance of new guidelines on watershed development based on the Hanumantha Rao Committee report with effect from April 1995. It provides for the development of an entire compact micro-watershed rather than pieces of wastelands scattered at different places. The strength of the guidelines lies in the decentralisation of decision-making process by involving local panchayati raj institutions and people at grassroot level. It aims at establishing a system under which village people can actually involve themselves in the planning, implementation and monitoring of watershed development programme.

In the preparation of the watershed development plan, user groups and other people depending directly on the watershed have to be actively involved. Another strength of these guidelines lies on the flexible approach followed in the method of release of funds, the area to be covered in each watershed, as well as choice of components. Besides this, the new guide-

lines also attempt at making these projects sustainable by establishing a watershed development fund and involving people in deciding equity issues and usufruct sharing mechanisms.

Technical assistance was to be provided by a multi-disciplinary team comprising experts from various departments and sectors to the programme implementing agencies (PIAs), which could be a line department, a NGO, a panchayat or a user group. A well-designed training programme was given top priority in order to create awareness among functionaries.

Progressive guidelines, however, do not always lead to desired action. The field staff is not trained to solicit participation, which continues to be 'an ideology without methodology', without a road map in sight. Disregard of peoples' participation is a legacy of the 'PWD culture' governing civil works. It also represents a continuation of the colonial approach to conservation, where community stake in resources, their knowledge and management systems do not count. The state's appropriation of community resources and dismantling of traditional management systems for CPRs and the promotion of conservation – technique-dominated, top down, government supported – initiatives are other factors which marginalised the communities and their stake in the resources.

Local collective action in the last 30 years has also been undermined by a number of political and economic processes. Village societies have become heterogeneous, and market forces have commercialised the erstwhile subsistence economies integrating them with urban and national economies. Possibilities for migration and mobility tend to work against cooperation. Moreover, anti-poverty

programmes such as the Indira Awaas Yojana increase the dependence of the poor on the village elite and petty bureaucracy and at the same time make them compete within themselves for limited favours from government. This adversely affects the sustainability of people coming together for a common cause.

Cooperation works best in small groups with similarity of needs and clear boundaries, and shared norms and patterns of reciprocity. Competitive politics erodes the traditional authority structures, and modernisation improves the options of both exit and voice for the common people. As old authority structures crumble, appeals to government for conflict resolution and arbitration become more common, and dependence on government for local resource management increases. Many rural communities in developing countries are now in this difficult transition period, with traditional institutions on the decline while new self-governing institutions are yet to be born.

Although five years is too short a time to evaluate the new guidelines, yet limited evidence suggests that most projects have failed to generate sustainability. A major study was done for the ICAR in 1998 (reported in Farrington edited *Participatory Watershed Development*, OUP, 1999) of 70 villages in Maharashtra and A.P., covering several watershed programmes. The survey revealed that increase in agricultural production did not last for more than two years. Structures were abandoned because of lack of maintenance and there was no mechanism for looking after common lands. Farmers were not convinced about the need to contribute, which would happen only when they make the decisions about what kind of measures are introduced on their plots.

Often, in government projects, farmers do not have this choice and technological norms are too inflexible. The very fact that farmers are unwilling to contribute towards the cost of works shows that they have little faith in the effectiveness of the programme. Except for the villages where NGOs were active, all other programmes scored poorly. In many cases performance in control villages which had no investment was better. Most government watershed development investments have yielded disappointing results given the vast resources allocated to date.

For watershed projects to be sustainable, community managed systems are needed and they can succeed only with farmers' contribution and their commitment of time and resources. Although the common guidelines prescribe that those benefiting from works on private land should make a contribution of 10% of the total cost and 5% for works on common lands, in practice it has been difficult to either collect these charges in full or recovery is often shown on paper but adjusted by the contractor in his bill.

For sustainability it is important that the contribution from farmers be a necessary commitment before the start of a project, for that would ensure a sense of ownership leading to better quality and transparency and assured money for maintenance. It may be pointed out here that Myrada, an NGO working in southern India, insists that all works on private lands should be fully financed by the individuals concerned.

Watershed development projects are being implemented by several departments of the Government of India, often with different guidelines. This causes confusion and brings a bad name to the GOI because state

governments get the impression that there is no effective coordination between different central departments. Even when the approach or guidelines are common, funds are sanctioned by different departments, and each does its own separate monitoring.

Other reasons for poor implementation of watershed projects are

¹ Insecurity about availability of funding at the grassroot level, as there is no guarantee that funds would be released in time by the GOI or other funding agencies. Pressure to spend available funds by a fixed deadline so that more funds could be demanded.

² Limited time permitted for preparatory and group formation activities. A strict orientation to achieving physical targets discourages field staff from taking time to promote social organisation. Field staff has no incentive to make the effort to pursue participatory approaches.

³ There is little impact assessment or evaluation of physical progress after the scheme has run for a couple of years. It is taken for granted that once money has been spent, physical progress automatically results. It is quite likely that soil conservation structures may not last for more than a few years, or plantations may not survive.

⁴ Unclear criteria for selecting areas and villages or for withdrawing from a village.

⁵ Limited human resource capabilities. Government staff have sometimes subcontracted all work related to participatory processes to NGOs without developing any internal capacity.

⁶ As funds from the Ministry of Rural Development go straight to the districts, there is little involvement of senior state government officials and line agencies. Watershed development programmes require a compre-

hensive and integrated approach involving several line departments and, therefore, the full involvement of state governments is essential.

⁷ In the present form, schemes are left to be planned and executed by district level officers. The capability of district level officers to plan and write a good project is extremely limited. Moreover, once it is realised that senior officers from the divisional and state capitals take no interest in such schemes or their interest is limited to monitoring of financial expenditure alone, the quality of project preparation and of implementation suffers a great deal.

⁸ Horizontal linkages between various line agencies at the district level are very weak. Thus, although watershed development may require integration of soil conservation techniques with plantation, there is little likelihood of effective coordination between the district soil conservation officer and the district forest officer. The tendency in Indian administration is to look up to seniors rather than establish linkages with officers in other departments at an equal level.

⁹ There is no arrangement for handing over of structures and maintenance of plantation after a project is completed. Therefore, sustainability of projects gets impaired.

It should be stressed here that watershed development programmes should only indirectly address the problem of poverty or unemployment. It should be aimed at increasing or stabilising the carrying capacity of land and water resources in rainfed areas. As poverty is both a cause and effect of over-exploitation of natural resources, successful implementation of watershed development programmes would result in sustainable reduction in poverty. On the other hand if production is not emphasised as the goal,

one may end up by achieving neither reduction in poverty nor employment.

At the same time, given that development of agriculture on a watershed basis would be biased in favour of those who own land, it is important to ensure that the landless do not suffer in contrast. Access to land through *pattas* on common property resources, equitable distribution of grazing opportunities, usufructory rights on forest produce and development of non-farm employment would have to be ensured in order that equity considerations are not lost sight of.

Furthermore, the interface of the watershed associations/committees with the panchayati raj institutions, particularly the gram panchayats, is tenuous. Of course, members of the watershed association are also members of the gram sabha, but they would have to be made accountable to both the gram sabha and the gram panchayat.

A new Department of Land Resources has recently been created in April 1999 by merging the schemes of area development, such as DPAP, DDP (Desert Development Programme) and watershed development/soil conservation/social forestry part of the Employment Assurance Scheme with the present Department of Wastelands Development. In order to ensure that past mistakes are not repeated, the new department would have to lay greater emphasis on performance. Capacity building of grassroot organisations in planning, monitoring, implementation and marketing should be the future strategy. Other features of the new approach should be

¹ There should be constant monitoring, evaluation, impact assessment by external experts. NABARD, MANAGE, NIRD, among others, should be involved in this exercise.

² Funds in the first stage should be given for those states that set up

organisational structures to properly appraise and evaluate such projects

¹ High priority should be given to rejuvenation of village ponds and tanks, and recharge of groundwater

² There should be integration of all area development with the felt needs of the people, such as drinking water and credit

³ Panchayats should be involved and their involvement should include transfer of funds to such village level bodies, including user groups, who would handle funds and the job of government agencies should be to facilitate and train rather than control funds. Where panchayats represent several villages, single village organisations, as sub-units of panchayats should be created, so that land in question is appurtenant to one village only to avoid conflict

⁴ The ownership and control over revenue wastelands should be transferred to PRIs and village organisations to ensure certainty of tenure. In ex-ryotwari states, transfer of revenue lands to panchayats has still not been done, which makes it problematic for the village panchayats to 'own up' efforts on such lands

⁵ Since cultivable wastelands in many states have already been settled with the poor, special projects should be undertaken to make such lands productive. Private ownership will help in sustained increase in land productivity

In short, the objective of all land based intervention should be, 'to enable rural people in rainfed regions to prevent, arrest and reverse degradation of life support systems, particularly land and water, so as to produce biomass in a sustainable and equitable manner'

It is important to look at forest lands, non-forest wastelands and crop lands in an integrated manner. This is

often not done as upstream treatment to reduce soil movement does not benefit large farmers who are downstream. They see no advantage and are indifferent or opposed to this strategy. They would prefer to conserve and harvest water in the drainage line so that it can be used directly for irrigation or to replenish groundwater

However, lands in the upper catchment should be rehabilitated first for at least three reasons. To benefit the landless and the poor who depend on the upper slopes, so that groundwater recharge begins at the earliest, and by the time the lower catchment is treated any debris and erosion running down from the upper catchment has been minimised

However, upper slopes are typically under the control of the forest department, which does not permit other departments to operate on its lands. The Ministry of Rural Development has recently permitted its funds to be used in watershed schemes by the FD, but a similar initiative is needed from the Ministry of Agriculture too

One of the least understood but most useful concepts is the issue of complementarity between forests and agriculture. If it is strengthened, the local community develops a stake in the preservation of forests, which can deter individual attempts at encroachments or degradation

Also, at present, the three life support systems, i.e. land, water and forests, remain unintegrated administratively and management-wise. Therefore, the government should strive towards an integrated planning approach at the village level through peoples' participation. It is only by linking the future of forests and uncultivated lands with crop lands and groundwater recharge that will ensure the sustainability of government efforts

Wastelands and Common property land resources

KANCHAN CHOPRA

It is often stated that land is a scarce resource in India. Figures on a declining per capita availability of land are often quoted in this context. Simultaneously, and somewhat paradoxically, a concern is also expressed with regard to the large magnitude of wasteland in the country. Even if it is conceded that definitions of wastelands and their estimates vary widely, the question arises: why are we not able to make better use of our wastelands? Is it due to the absence of well-developed technologies? Or is it a matter of non-specification of ownership arising out of ambiguity in property rights to land?

In other words, is wasteland open access or common property land? Why and how should property rights on land be changed and what impact is this likely to have on efficient use, on distribution of produce of land, and on the supply of different kinds of goods and services, including ecosystem services. This paper examines some of these issues.

The first section compares estimates of wasteland obtained from different sources. These are then compared with alternative estimates of common property land to examine the extent of convergence or overlapping between these two sets. Finally, policy

issues relating to change in property rights over land and their possible impacts are discussed.

The policy-maker has often to examine the scope for possible interventions to enable better use of wasteland at the state or national level. Existing classifications of land use need to be examined in order to do so. These classifications based on available data are a mix of use based and property rights based classifications. First, there exists the nine-fold classification of land use as reported in agricultural statistics (ALUS).¹ This can delineate use but not ownership categories which can only be inferred indirectly. Ownership with respect to agricultural land is specified additionally in the Agricultural Censuses (AC), as a part of which data is collected once every five years. The main distinction focused upon here is between ownership and operational holdings.

In some respects, the ALUS classification is partly a property rights classification. Forestland, one of the categories in the nine-fold classification, is often distinguished on the basis of categories of forests such as reserved, protected and unclassed.

¹ Source: The Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation, Government of India.

forests and these distinctions have connotations with regard to the nature of peoples' rights existing on them²

Legal ownership of 95.8% of the forest area is vested in the state. Only 2.5% of the forest area is with corporate bodies defined as 'municipal and other corporate bodies, village panchayats etc.' Rights of access to parts of the state owned forest have, however, existed for local communities. State owned forests can be reserved, protected or unclassified, depending on the category of forest cover. Though reserve forests have always been treated as inaccessible, protected and unclassified forests are partly accessible.

As far back as in 1907, the Imperial Gazetteer recorded that unclassified or public forest lands are those given over with even fewer restrictions for the use of the public.³ It further maintained that protected forests may be either in a state of transition into reserves, or intended to remain permanently in that class. In the latter case, more beneficial exercise of rights by local communities was allowed. It can, therefore, be concluded that access of local communities to protected forests would be inversely related to the magnitude of their conversion to reserve forests.

The Government of India Gazetteer of 1975 also holds that local people have virtually unrestricted rights of felling trees and grazing livestock in protected forests.⁴ On the basis of these pieces of indirect evidence, it can be concluded that whereas no access to reserve forests was granted either by law or by use,⁵ local

communities had access to protected forests, both by law and more significantly by convention.

As against the above, classification of land in accordance with its physical status throws light on the magnitude of degradation. Wasteland, in this context is defined as, 'degraded land that can be brought under vegetative cover with reasonable effort and which is currently underutilized land and land which is deteriorating due to lack of appropriate water and soil management or on account of natural causes'. Early attempts at estimating this category, made primarily by the National Wasteland Development Board (NWDB), were based on a reclassification of the standard land use data described above.⁶ These estimates yield the oft-quoted figure of 129.57 million hectares with non-forest wasteland being estimated at 93.69 million hectares.

Remote sensing techniques (NRSA) provide an alternative classification of land use/land cover. They are based on 22 categories of land use. Seven of these categories comprise non-forest wasteland and two can be classified as wasteland falling within forests.

The NRSA has two sets of estimates of wastelands in India using data based on these techniques.⁷ The first uses Landsat data on a 1:1 million scale of mapping. The second uses LISS-I and LISS-2 data with a 1:250,000 mapping. These two sets give differing estimates of wastelands. The second estimate puts wastelands at 75.53 mha, the first at 53.3

mha. Both estimates yield a much lower figure for wastelands than the NWDB exercise.

Apart from the varying estimates, arising out of methodological differences, none of these classifications pertain to property rights, which should in effect distinguish between private, communal, open access and state ownership. Policy interventions in order to be appropriate and successful need to be informed about the kind of property rights on wasteland. Are these lands under private ownership? Or are they essentially open access lands labelled as 'common property'?

In this paper, an attempt is made to develop a methodology to estimate the magnitude of one such property rights determined category—common property resources in land in India. We shall, as a starting point, estimate common property lands for 1990-91.⁸ The estimates obtained are then compared to the estimates obtained from a recent exercise undertaken by the National Sample Survey to estimate common property resources in India.

II

Three major kinds of property rights regimes can be identified in the context of development in India: privately owned land as in net sown area in agriculture, state owned and/or managed land such as forestland, and land with varying degrees of state/private/common access. The last may be defined to include forestland, non-forest wasteland and common property land. Land is laid waste due to a lack of property rights on it; this view is often misread as due to its being 'a common property resource'.

Common property resources (CPRs) are often viewed in general

⁸ For estimates for 1980 see Chopra, Kadekodi and Murty (1990). The methodology followed here is broadly the same.

2 The break-up of total forest area on the basis of legal status and ownership is obtained from forest statistics.

3 See *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire*, vol III.

4 See *The Gazetteer of India*, GOI, 1975.

5 Exceptions to this may also exist in parts of

the country, notably the north-east.

6 See Government of India (1989) for the definition and estimates.

7 See GOI, Department of Space (1995). The estimates of wasteland obtained from these two sources vary considerably. See Kadekodi (1997) for a comparative analysis.

parlance as a category on which ambiguous rights exist. This perception is at variance with the perception in the literature on property rights, which conceptualizes common property as 'private property for a group'⁹ with organizational systems circumscribing the nature of rights and responsibilities existing within the group with respect to them. The difference in perception between the popular and the documented view is mainly due to the varying degree of access that now exists on common property as a consequence of the breakdown of the organizational systems associated with them.

In actual practice, varying degrees of access always exists. A distinction, for instance, could be made between ownership rights and user rights. In a functional sense at the village level, the rights and conditions that go with it are clear. Multiple uses and interrelated rights are the order of the day as any perceptive observer of rural society knows.

Further, sets of resources are sometimes characterized by complementarity in use, the linkages between these uses giving rise to common property rights regimes of differing kinds. Examples are easily found in rural societies in the context of waterbodies accessed for different purposes or by different groups of communities. Land situated in different parts of a watershed or tank, or used by different sets of right-holders at different times of the agricultural year.

In parts of Tamilnadu, for instance, landowners in the ayacut of a tank have prior right to the water for irrigation over landowners on tankfore, even though the tank is treated as community property.¹⁰ It is com-

mon for nomadic communities to possess sheep penning rights on private farmland in parts of Karnataka, Gujarat and other parts of semi-arid India.¹¹ Similarly, grazing rights on private land are accorded to pastoral communities after the harvesting of the monsoon crop.

Institutions formalising such combinations of common and private property rights continue to thrive as long as it is to the mutual advantage of the stakeholders. In other words, user rights may exist for certain purposes and at certain times. A complex mosaic of property rights regimes is therefore found to exist in different parts of the country.

It may be useful to point out that a large number of such institutional arrangements are the consequence of a continuous interaction between vested interest groups at local levels and it is not correct to surmise that equity plays an important role in their functioning. 'Mutual advantage' is often conditioned by the existing power structures.

Further, changing technology and increasing pressure on land are bound to destabilize these institutions, reflecting as they do local nuances. This process of destabilization results in ambiguity with respect to the structure of rights and duties, reinforcing the understanding popularly held that common property resources are indeed open access resources.

III

As stated in Section II, rights to common property resources are a matter of observation and record based on degree of access arising out of both ownership and use. Methodologies based on secondary data, where classifications of the kind listed in Section

II exist, cannot capture all the ramifications of this access. The attempt to determine broad orders of magnitude will be based, therefore, on assumptions with respect to both ownership and user rights dimensions and may involve over or under estimation in specific categories. The attempt is aimed at determining a range within which the estimates fall, with a view to providing directions for policy.

Estimates are made for 16 major states.¹² Table 1 gives the land use classification as available in the official statistics in India (ALUS) and the assumptions made by us regarding levels and sanctions for access as common property.

Column one of Table 1 lists the eight categories into which official land use statistics¹³ in India classify geographical land. Net sown area (including area under miscellaneous tree crops) and current fallow constitutes together a private property resource to which non-owners do not have access. Partial access has been found to exist to owned land, which may remain uncultivated due to some exigency. This could be due to an absence of capital investment, or the fact that the owner does not consider it worthwhile to invest in marginal or submarginal land. For determining the magnitude of such land, the following methodology is adopted.

A comparison of data on owned land obtained from the Agricultural Census (AC) (1985-86) with that for net area sown and current fallow as obtained from official statistics (ALUS), is made.¹⁴ Since, at the state level

¹² The north-eastern states are not included in the exercise due to a lack of reliable land record statistics.

¹³ The data source is Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation, GOI.

¹⁴ Agricultural Census data are treated as most authentic as they are based on a complete

⁹ For such a definition see Bromley (1989).

¹⁰ For an exhaustive account of tank management in Tamilnadu see Shah et al. (1998).

¹¹ See Cincotti and Panagare (1993) for their excellent documentation.

total land leased in is approximately equal to land leased out, it is assumed that area owned and operated are equal for each state. Wherever area owned obtained from the Agricultural Census exceeds the sum of net area sown and current fallow as obtained from the land use statistics, it is assumed that rights of common access exist on this surplus land (column 2 of Table 2). This may or may not be marginal land.

In other words, private land to which common access may exist is equal to

$PLCPR = \text{Total Owned Area (obtained From AC)} - (\text{Net Sown Area} + \text{Current Fallows})$ (obtained From ALUS)

Such a comparison of the two data sources reveals that in 1991, limited common access to uncultivated private land existed in the seven states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan and to an almost negligible extent, Tamilnadu.

A comparison with earlier estimates for 1980-81 shows that magnitude of private land to which common access could have been permissible decreased significantly in all states except Tamilnadu and Karnataka.¹⁵

Fallows other than current, cultivable wastes, (including pastures

and other grazing lands) are included in the estimation of common property resources¹⁶ as partial or complete access is permitted to these areas either by law or by convention.

The next category of land to which common property rights may exist is land under forests, divided into reserved, protected and unclassified forests. In our estimates protected and unclassified forests are treated as forming a part of common property resources, keeping in mind that this may yield an over estimate of land to which common property may exist.¹⁷

It is therefore the subset of total forest area minus reserve forests to which common property rights are assumed to exist. State-wise total forest area is taken from NRSA estimates. Reserve forest, being a legal classification, has to be obtained from land use data. The total common property resources in land are thus defined as the sum of

- i) that part of land, which, though officially classified as privately owned, allows partial common access since it is not sown on
- ii) cultivable wastes and fallows other than current
- iii) common pastures and grazing land, and

iv) protected and unclassified forests

CPR area so defined is estimated for 16 major states in India. Table 2 gives some orders of magnitude obtained from the estimates. CPR area comes to between 4 and 32% of the total geographical area of the different states in the early '90s if the outliers (Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan) are left out.

A close examination of common property land estimates suggests division of the states into two groups

- 1) States where the common property land area is low, being less than or around 10% of geographical area in both years. Punjab and Haryana fall in this category. These two states are at an advanced level of agricultural development and are characterized by a large percentage of land under private ownership. Correspondingly, common property land area per capita is low.
- 2) States where the common property land area falls in the range of around 10 to 30%. A number of states such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamilnadu and Uttar Pradesh (in the '80s only) fall in this group.
- 3) The outliers constitute a separate category. Rajasthan has a common

enumeration of all holdings in all states in India. To arrive at the state level figures on land owned from the Agricultural Census, the category 'land wholly owned' is added to the category 'land owned', as obtained from partly owned and partly rented land.

¹⁵ The decrease is explicable in terms of population pressure and the consequent demand for land. The increase is probably due to the larger magnitude of land reportedly left fallow in states such as Tamilnadu.

¹⁶ This may involve some overestimation of CPRs, as 'protected and unclassified forests' includes privately owned pastures.

¹⁷ We are abstracting from the controversy around estimates of the total forest area in the country. According to forest statistics, which

TABLE 1

Identification of Common Property Resources		
(1) <i>Classification of land</i>	(2) <i>Included in common property land</i>	(3) <i>Source of sanction for access (as assumed in the estimation)</i>
Net sown area	No	On uncultivated owned land limited user rights
Current fallow	No	On uncultivated owned land limited user rights
Fallow other than current	Yes	User rights by convention
Cultivable waste	Yes	Partial user rights by convention
Pastures and other grazing land	Yes	User rights by law
Barren and uncultivable land	May be included	No access
Area put to non-agricultural use	No	No access
Forest area		
1 Reserved	No	No access
2 Protected	Partial	Partial user rights
3 Unclassified	Yes	User rights by law

property land area of 35%, which appears an overestimation¹⁸ Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, on account of being hill states, show varying characteristics. This is because of large areas of protected forests in Himachal Pradesh, which makes the area under common property lands unduly high, and similar large areas in the category of reserve forests in Jammu and Kashmir, which decreases common property land area to an unusually low level.

Non-forest common property land is shown separately in Table 2 in order to eliminate the effect of such classification of forest area on the estimates. This estimate also has the benefit of showing the extent of access to common property land under the jurisdiction of private persons or local bodies.

Total common property land in the 16 states is 70 042 million hectares. Of this 44 983 mha or about 64.23% is non-forest land. As stated

is based on land use and legal status data, 74.86 million hectares comprising 22.73% of the geographical area can be classified as forest area. The corresponding figure given by the first figures from National Remote Sensing Agency (based on satellite data for 1980-82) is 46.35 million hectares comprising 14.10% of the geographical area. The discrepancy is basically due to differences in methods of data collection and definitions of status. In the late '80s an exercise was carried out by the Forest Survey to attempt a reconciliation of the two data sources by undertaking a critical comparison of their respective methodologies. For the late '80s, we have used this source. It depends, by and large, on satellite data. We know, however, that estimates can differ due to alternative methods of interpreting this data and to the presence or otherwise of ground truthing.

¹⁸ Some of the states in this category may also have large tribal belts; the overestimation in the case of Rajasthan may, however, be only partly true. See Jodha's estimate of CPR area in Rajasthan as a percentage of geographical area in Table 4.

¹⁹ These estimates are from Kadakodi (1997).

²⁰ It is all the more well known that the extent of variation in CPR will be still higher

earlier, estimates have not been made for the eastern states in which there is reason to believe land records are faulty. Available estimates indicate that if these states are also taken into account, total common property land area increases to 74 573 million hectares. Further, common property land area varies from 25 to 52% of geographical area in these states.¹⁹

Changes over time in the magnitude of common property land both as a percentage of the geographical area and in per capita terms can be estimated. It is found that in a majority of the states, land to which common property land rights exist has decreased. Per capita common property land has also gone down. The decrease is more pronounced in the arid and semi arid states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Rajasthan.

It is found that both the levels of common property land area in different states and changes over time have exhibited interesting patterns. River basins, where crop production on private land is a profitable activity,

have a low percentage of land under common property whereas high rainfall mountains and sub mountainous regions have a high percentage. Arid and semi arid states, where livestock rearing is an important activity, also have large amounts of land as common pastures adding to common property land area.²⁰

IV

The methodology followed in arriving at the above estimates of common property land is essentially one of reclassification of land use statistics, supplemented by data from the agricultural censuses and from satellite imagery. This is, perhaps, inescapable if we are to get a comparative macro level picture for different states and different points of time. It would, however, be useful to compare the estimates obtained by using this approach with those obtained from village level studies based on the participant observer method.

Jodha's study (1986) of common property lands in the dryland regions of India provides one such exhaustive

TABLE 2

Statistics on Common Property Lands: 1990-91					
State	Total common property land (000 HA)	Non-forest common property land (000 HA)	CPR/GA	Common property land per capita (HA)	NF-CPL/GA
A P	5989	4624	0.22	0.09	0.16
Bihar	5267	2850	0.30	0.06	0.16
Gujarat	3269	2707	0.17	0.08	0.14
Haryana	190	44	0.04	0.01	0.009
H P	5188	1619	0.93	1.00	0.29
J&K	278	278	0.012	0.06	0.00
Karnataka	3207	2203	0.17	0.07	0.11
Keerala	331	207	0.08	0.01	0.05
M P	13,890	6446	0.32	0.21	0.15
Maharashtra	8039	5926	0.26	0.10	0.19
Orissa	4882	1537	0.31	0.15	0.09
Punjab	359	73	0.07	0.01	0.014
Rajasthan	11977	11697	0.35	0.27	0.34
Tamil Nadu	2773	2387	0.21	0.05	0.18
U P	3756	2221	0.13	0.03	0.07
West Bengal	647	164	0.07	0.01	0.018
Total (16 states only)	70,042	44,983			

set of estimates. They are based on intensive village level surveys in 21 districts in seven states. Perhaps the estimates are more precise for the villages to which they refer than any conceivable estimates derived from any secondary state level data. Second, even in the states to which they apply, as they refer only to dry tropical regions, they are likely to be lower than those estimated in this study.

Thus, Jodha's data leaves out, by definition, those regions where the forest cover is higher. In at least four of the seven states considered by Jodha, protected and unclassified forests form a considerable part of the forest area, which are treated as common property land area here. To make the two estimates comparable, common property land area, net of protected and unclassified forests, shall be considered for the states studied by Jodha.

Even so, we find that the two sets of estimates seem to deviate from each other. A case therefore exists for a closer determination of magnitudes at local levels before undertaking area specific policy initiatives.

The National Sample Survey (NSS), in its 54th round (1998) has estimated CPR land per household at the state level. Using a restricted *de jure* approach, preliminary estimates²¹ indicate that CPL land constitutes 15% of geographical area in India on an average. The percentage varies from 1% in the Punjab to 22% in Rajasthan. It is interesting to note that these broad orders of magnitude and inter-state variations agree with the estimates arrived at above on the basis of a reclassification of land-use statistics.

In addition to estimating magnitudes, the NSS also comments on the dependence of poor rural house-

holds on common property lands. The NSS reports that 45% of all rural households in India collect fuel wood from common property lands and 48% households report some collection. While the average value of this collection is not high, 58% of it consists of fuel wood.

V

It is clear that common property land and degraded land refer to two alternative classifications of land area. Wastelands are in the main defined as ecological categories (by the National Wastelands Development Board and the National Remote Sensing Agency) though the Ministry of Agriculture also adopts a classification based on land productivity.

It is true that, historically, the British termed most non-revenue yielding land as 'the wastes'. However, both the NWDB and the NRSA classifications seem to give primacy to the physical characteristics of land. Non-forest wasteland in the NRSA classification, for instance, extends to the following kinds of land: salt affected land, waterlogged land, marshy/swampy land, gullied/ravinous land, land with and without scrub, sandy area, barren, stony and sheet rock area, mining and industrial waste and snow covered area.

Correspondingly, within forest area, degraded forest and forest blanks can be classified as wasteland. Clearly, these characteristics are independent of either the revenue yielding nature of the land or the nature of existing property rights. It is just possible, by this definition, that privately owned revenue generating land (in a canal command, for instance), be a part of wasteland.

Land may be laid waste for a number of reasons, one among them being the nature of property rights.

Often, an unstated assumption is that lands with open access or with poorly defined common access are more likely to be laid waste. Be that as it may, it is clear that common property land and wasteland define two separate, albeit partly overlapping sets. The existence of common or open access to a certain land is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for its being a low productivity wasteland.²²

Estimates of common property land and of wasteland in the 16 major states being considered is shown in Table 3. Total wasteland is taken as estimated by NWDB to be 129.57 million hectares of which 93.69 are non-forest wasteland. A recent set of data comes from NRSA. This data set is comparable with the NWDB data as it is based on ecological categories. However, it seems to yield a much lower estimate of wastelands as compared to NWDB estimates.

According to this data source, the total degraded forest area has come down from 35.89 to 16.3 million hectares and non-forest degraded area from 93.69 to 44.39 million hectares at the all India level.²³ Since this is highly unlikely in the short span of time separating the two estimates, there is reason to believe that the underestimation arises out of different estimational procedures.

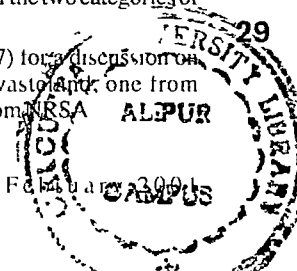
Table 4 gives our estimate of common property lands together with NRSA estimates of wasteland.

From Table 3, it is clear that wasteland in a state may be more or less than common property land. Use of inappropriate technology on pri-

22 This issue is discussed exhaustively in Kadekodi and Perwaiz (1998). They also give comparative estimates of the two categories of land.

23 See Kadekodi (1997) for a discussion on the two data sets on wasteland: one from NWDB and the other from NRSA.

21 See NSS (1999) Fifty-fourth round Draft Report No. 54/3 3/31.



vate agricultural land, for instance, may result in waterlogging or salinity rendering it into wasteland. Policy may be concentrated on one or other of the two categories, depending on the issue at hand.

From the perspective of grass-root interventions, it is important to distinguish between land that is intrinsically of low capability, that gets degraded due to technological factors and that which is degraded due to the absence of well-spelt out property rights. Table 4 gives estimates of those different categories of land.

It is found that, at the national level, wasteland is of a lower magnitude than common property land. Considering that some of this wasteland may be privately owned land, commonly owned wasteland is a subset of common property land. This conclusion is strengthened when we look at common property land and wasteland within forests. Here wasteland is only about 75% of forest-

land to which common property rights may exist. When we note that forest blanks (included in wasteland) may exist as management devises in reserve forests, the conclusion that some common property land is indeed of high productivity seems inescapable.

While differences of definition and methodology result in variations in estimates, it is clear that the category of common property land is not negligible in many parts of the country. In addition, there is evidence that some of it is indeed not wasteland.

Scope does exist, therefore, for meaningful grassroots intervention on some land which produces less than it is capable of. Such intervention can take the form of specification of property rights institutions.

For purposes of analysis and policy formulation on the basis of magnitude of common property land, and the ratio of wastelands in common property lands, the country may be divided into the following regions:

1) The tribal hill states of the North East. Common property institutions play an important part in their economies. In these states, land records of so-called private land are not complete, mainly because it constitutes an alien category in some areas.

2) The agriculturally developed states where common property in land seems small in relation to the total, and private property in land and related assets are the basis of development. Here, the significance of common property land would depend on its distributional impact, i.e., on its significance for the livelihood of the rural poor, in

particular in the context of instability in agricultural output from year to year.

3) The less developed dry tropical regions of India where common property land may range from 10% to 20% of the geographical area. These regions are deficient in rainfall, and institutions for promoting better use of common property land have a great role to play in improving productivity of marginal lands and in providing employment and livelihood to the rural poor.

4) The relatively high rainfall regions where a large part of common property land may be forest land. Here environmental preservation and its wise use for market related economic activities may become an important objective requiring the creation of more efficient institutions, within and outside of state control.

Finally, one may ask a related policy question: What reason is there to believe that changing patterns of demand, together with rising incomes, in the rural areas shall not render CPRs irrelevant as providers of consumption to the rural poor?

Note, for instance, that the land use scenario emerging out of the food-agriculture situation in India indicates that in the future a larger percentage of area shall be under non-cereal and non-food crops which register larger relative changes in production. Indirect demand for cereals for livestock feed shall increase due to a changed consumption pattern with greater emphasis on milk and milk products. Commons and community accessed grazing lands could have a major role to play in this context.

Alternatively, a large part of this increased demand shall have to be met by cultivating fodder. Further, there is evidence that household consumption of fuelwood may go down with rising

TABLE 3

Comparative Statistics on Common Property Lands and Wastelands

State	Total common property land (000 HA)	Non-forest common property land (000 HA)	Total waste land (000 HA)
A P	5989	4624	5932
Bihar	5267	2850	2474
Gujarat	3269	2707	4189
Haryana	190	44	357
H P	5188	1619	1069
J&K	278	278	3714
Karnataka	3207	2203	2680
Kerala	331	207	163
M P	13 890	6446	8872
Maharashtra	8039	5926	6209
Orissa	4882	1537	2045
Punjab	359	73	370
Rajasthan	11977	11697	9605
Tamil Nadu	2773	2387	2272
U P	3756	2221	5007
West Bengal	647	164	435
Total (16 states only)	70,042	44,983	

Notes: Wasteland data is from NRSA (1989)

TABLE 4

Degraded Land and Common Property Land (000 hectares)			
	Forest land	Non-forest land	Total
Common property land	25712	48861	74579
Wasteland	18088	44390	60663

per capita incomes and shift to better quality fuel

Does the above imply that forestland, non-forest wasteland and CPRs as sources of value shall get marginalised in the course of the next 20 years or so? It can be argued that the use value that the rural poor get out of CPRs (documented extensively in the last 10-15 years) shall decrease progressively to be substituted by market purchased goods and services or that most production shall come from private property

Such a hypothesis has, firstly to be supported by detailed empirical evidence on the nature of the substitution effect. Even if it turns out that use value of extraction for consumption is likely to decrease overtime, the following functions of non privately owned lands will impact on the sustainability of India's productive resource base

Production on privately owned land is dependent on the continued availability of some kinds of inputs such as water. For these above to be provided, it is important to maintain critical watersheds in a healthy state. Maintenance of the hydrological cycle is a key component of essential natural capital. As seen in a recent study on sustainable development of water resources,²⁴ maintaining off-seasons flows in streams requires that adequate vegetative cover be maintained on the higher slopes

Such complementarity between production on private land and maintenance of natural capital is more

likely to be achieved if community or community-state partnerships at decentralised levels are fostered. Private ownership usually results in land use being dictated by price signals. Commercially viable crop production may replace other kinds of

vegetative cover and this may have negative external impacts on crop production elsewhere (via either soil erosion or water cycle disruption or reduction in offseason flows in surface water streams or a combination of all three)

Other ecological functions which vegetative cover performs are those of preserving biodiversity and acting as a carbon sink. A large body of literature maintains that such functions are also better performed by community-state partnerships at local level. Further, some of these functions may also have a market value, such as through eco-tourism, value addition activities linked to non-timber forest products, and the possibility of marketing bio-resources

There may also be a market value for carbon sink functions under climate change agreements. The significance of these functions may, thus, be enhanced by a suitable exploitation of market-driven opportunities

In conclusion, it may be said that with proliferation of development opportunities to the countryside, the significance of common property lands as providers of subsistence consumption to the needy may decrease. However, their significance as providers of ecosystem functions, complementary with increased agricultural production, will come to be increasingly recognised. So will the possibility of market-linked economic activity based on their sustainable use. New and evolving patterns of management for these lands will certainly be called for

References

- Bromley D W (1989) *Economic Interests and Institutions: the conceptual foundations of public policy*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford and New York
- Chopra, Kanchan G K, Kadekodi and M N Murty (1990), *Participatory Development: People and Common Property Resources*, Sage Publications, New Delhi and London
- Chopra, Kanchan and B N Goldar (2000) Sustainable Development Framework for India, the Case of Water Resources, Report prepared for UN University Tokyo's project on Sustainable Development Framework for India. Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi
- Cincotti R and G Panagari (1993), 'Pastoralists: Brokers of Agricultural Soil Fertility', *Wasteland News*, February-April
- GOI Department of Space (1995) Report on Area Statistics of Land Use and Land Cover Using Remote-Sensing Techniques, NRSA, Hyderabad
- GOI Ministry of Agriculture Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Agricultural Statistics of India, different years
- GOI (1989) *Developing India's Wastelands*, Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi
- GOI (1980-81 and 1990-91) Agricultural Census, Ministry of Agriculture, Agricultural Census Division
- GOI (1975) Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, *The Gazetteer of India: Economic Structure and Activity*, II
- Jodha, N S (1986) 'Common Property Resources and the Rural Poor in Dry Regions of India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 30(27), 5 July pp 1169-81
- Kadekodi K Gopal (1997), Valuation of Common Property Resource Management: Regeneration with Community Involvement, Mimeo, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi
- Kadekodi, K Gopal and Aslam Perwaiz (1998), Dimensions of Wasteland and Common Property Resources in India, Institute of Economic Growth Working Paper No E/190/98
- National Sample Survey (1999) Common Property Resources: Fifty-fourth Round Draft Report No 54/3 3/31, NSSO, Department of Statistics, Government of India, New Delhi
- Shah Tushar, R, Sreenivasan C R, Shanmugam and M P Vasimalai, Sustaining Tamilnadu's Tanks, in D K Marothia edited (1998) *Institutionalising Common Property Resources*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi
- The Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1907) *The Indian Empire*, vol III, The Clarendon Press, Oxford

24 See Chopra and Goldar (2000)

Empowering agrarian society

AJAY S MEHTA

THE development of wastelands, a great deal of which exists in our society, presents both an opportunity to improve the livelihoods of the rural poor and to empower agrarian civil society. The former concern has come to engage a great deal of interest on the part of policy-makers, environmentalists, NGOs and the state, but little or no attention has been paid to the latter possibility. This note attempts to show wastelands as the site where mass rural poverty and the disempowerment of agrarian civil society converge. The challenge for wasteland development initiatives is to reverse both kinds of deprivation.

The factors for the creation of wastelands are well known. These have to do with the commercialization of natural resources at the expense of the livelihood needs of local people on the one hand, and the alienation of local communities from the management of these resources on the other. What is less understood about the contemporary management of public wastelands is that those most dependent on these lands for their livelihoods are themselves internally divided and compromised in their ability to restore the productivity of these resources. It is well known that the poor are dependent on the commons for their livelihood needs and yet their relationship to public lands is such that they are unable to come together and institutionalize efforts to regenerate the wastelands on which their lives are heavily dependent. It is also the case that in areas of mass rural poverty the bulk of the land mass

is owned if not managed by the state and institutions of panchayati raj.

It is now recognized that the over-exploitation of the commons, forest lands and pasture lands for commercial gains has adversely affected the economy and well-being of the rural poor. What is less well recognized is that the custodians of public lands have systematically vitiated the ability of the poor to properly manage these lands. They have informally privatised these resources in order to derive rents and gain power and control over villagers.

The form that this takes is for state functionaries to permit peasants, rich and poor alike, to encroach on public lands. Most pasture lands vested with gram panchayats tend to be heavily encroached by the village elite, elected panchayat representatives and a smattering of villagers from the spectrum of deprived social and economic groups in the village community. These popular but derelict land practices result in land and social relations that discourage community action and emasculate institutions of local self-governance. More perniciously, it disempowers leaders of civil society vis-à-vis state functionaries.

The situation and consequences with respect to the management of revenue and forest lands is similar. All categories of lands have encroachments. While the state periodically makes provisions to regularize encroachments of the poor, these steps do not mitigate the adverse consequences of ad hoc encroachments leading to conflicts among villagers, since those

who encroach deny access to the traditional users of the commons

In the last decade and a half there have been many significant initiatives by the state to address the problems of wastelands. One common feature of the new initiatives is the idea that the current crisis of large-scale degradation of land is best solved through peoples' participation. In 1985 a National Wasteland Development Board was created to foster a peoples' movement to afforest wastelands with the help of the voluntary sector. Substantial sums of money were made available to the voluntary agencies to promote wasteland development. In 1988, forest policy was changed to give village people a stake in the development and management of forest department lands. The policy resulted in the crystallization of the Joint Forest Management guidelines that allowed village people to assist the forest department in the rehabilitation of degraded forestlands and share benefits with the forest department.

In 1994 the Ministry of Rural Development issued guidelines for developing degraded watersheds through peoples' participation. Access to all categories of public and private lands is provided in these guidelines to those who are willing to rehabilitate degraded watersheds. These initiatives are informed by the idea of moving from a state-centred approach to a people-centred approach to land management. While highly significant, the one issue that does not get addressed in all these initiatives is the complication on account of land governance practices that attenuate cooperative action and emasculate the autonomy of institutions of self-governance.

While significant if not spectacular successes have been attributed to the efficacy of these new policy ini-

tiatives in various parts of the country, the experience of one fairly systematic and long-term effort at wasteland development with which the author is familiar suggests otherwise. Seva Mandir, an NGO, took up wasteland development work on a large scale at the initiative of the National Wasteland Development Board which gave it a large grant to create a peoples' movement for afforesting the highly degraded lands of the Aravali hill ranges, the home of large numbers of poor peasants and livestock herders. Since 1985, Seva Mandir has been actively engaged in wasteland development work in about 500 villages. Seva Mandir's programmes for wasteland development are attractive in monetary terms, they compensate village people for the opportunity cost of treating and protecting their degraded lands.

Since then, Seva Mandir has cumulatively treated over 8000 ha of degraded land. Out of this amount less than 20% of the treated land is publicly held land or common property resource, while the rest is privately owned. What is striking about this proportion of private to public lands treated is the fact that the compensation for treating common lands is significantly higher than it is for treating privately owned lands. In the case of the private lands the contribution of the owner for land development is on an average 50%, while for common lands the expected contribution is 10% of total land development costs.

Close to 70% of the land in the area is publicly held. Yet, despite Seva Mandir's concentration on creating a peoples' movement for wasteland development, it is unable to find common properties near village habitations that are not encumbered with encroachments and conflicts over user rights. The small amount of land that

did become available for treatment is the result of enormous effort put in by Seva Mandir and villagers to persuade villagers and state authorities to vacate encroachments.

Over time, due to a positive demonstration effect of works completed, there has been an increase in the supply of common property resources for development purposes, but this increase is far from constituting a movement for wasteland development. On a more positive note what is interesting is the fact that in the 50 odd locations where the commons have been developed, in two-thirds of the locations these lands have not been re-encroached and there is active community management of common property resources.

The conclusion to be drawn is that where clear land entitlements are institutionalized, village people are inclined to cooperate and manage common property resources responsibly. In other words, agrarian civil society institutions, notwithstanding socio-economic stratification, can become the locus of development action and management. There are enormous dividends to be had from empowering civil society through making land access transparent and in the nature of a clear entitlement. While the state has shown great imagination in changing its policy framework for land management, the hard work of disciplining its staff and village people to abide by the existing norms of public property ownership and use remains a neglected challenge. The dominant mode of land management remains patronage centred. The issue of derelict land governance needs to be addressed if wasteland development is to become a peoples' movement, an instrument of empowering agrarian civil society and alleviating mass poverty.

Community control

S R HIREMATH

'Nature can never be managed well unless the people closest to it are involved in its management and a healthy relationship is established between nature, society and culture. Common natural resources were earlier regulated through diverse, decentralized, community control systems. But the state's policy of converting common property resources into government property resources has put them under the control of centralized bureaucracies who in turn have put them at the service of the more powerful.'

'The process of state control over natural resources that started with the period of colonialism must be rolled back. Given the changed socio-economic circumstances and greater pressure on natural resources, new community control systems have to be established that are more highly integrated, scientifically sophisticated, equitable and sustainable. This is the biggest challenge.'¹

WHEN over 50 of us from across the country – scientists, activists associated with people's movements for environment protection – signed the above statement of shared concern in the Second Citizen's Report (1984-85),¹ we were both describing the genesis of the problem of environmental degradation and alienation of local people from natural resources and the challenge of establishing community control over natural resources. The process of alienation began around 1860, during colonial days, when the British began to 'reserve' the forests

as source of revenue for the state and for their commercial and industrial needs back home, and established the Forest Department in 1894.

This policy adversely affected the close and living relationship between natural resources, the tribals and rural poor who are critically dependent on them for their survival. While the so-called 'scientific management' may have served the strategic needs of the colonizer, it led to the destruction of the forest wealth of the people, adversely affected a wholesome lifestyle and culture on one hand and hit at their very survival base and a great civilization that had established a healthy relationship between nature, culture and society, on the other.

This paper deals with the above broad issues of common lands (all lands except private lands) from our grassroot experience of over two decades to the difficult fight against the forest mafia and changes in the policy and legal arena for meaningful people-centred management of natural resources.

It also addresses the greater challenge of re-establishing, in the present context, community control and management of natural resources.

like *jal*, *jungle*, *jameen* and *khaneej* (water, forest, land and minerals) on one hand and self-rule (empowered gram sabhas) on the other. This can be achieved by adopting a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to the issues of forestry and common lands that takes us to the core of our notions of 'progress' and 'civilization'. What we need is a second freedom movement to place the issues of people's control over livelihood resources and 'self rule' (empowered gram sabhas) on the national agenda, a task unfinished by our freedom movement.

Two developments in the early 1980s brought us face to face with the issues of common lands: (i) a state-industry combine called the Karnataka Pulpwood Ltd., (KPL), a joint sector company came into existence on 14 November 1984, and (ii) the Karnataka Social Forestry Project (KSFP), a five year (1983-88) Rs 55 crore project financed by the World Bank and Overseas Development Administration (ODA). Our involvement soon broadbased itself to the national level. This included fighting the timber mafia in the Bastar region in Madhya Pradesh, and working a national campaign for the protection of common lands, and making the large forestry projects relevant to people's needs, like the Western Ghats Forestry Project funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), U.K.

The KPL was formed by the Karnataka Forest Development Corporation (a corporation wholly owned by the Government of Karnataka) with 51% shares and the Birla owned Harihar Polyfibres (a private company which has heavily polluted the Tungabhadra river, a major lifeline of Karnataka, which joins the Krishna river downstream), with a 49% share. The sole purpose of KPL, with an ini-

tial outlay of Rs 30 crore, financed by a consortium of three nationalized banks with refinancing facility by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), was to grow eucalyptus and other fast growing trees on forest and community lands (*gomal*, *soppinabetta* and others) for captive consumption of Harihar Polyfibres. The KPL was to deprive a rural population of over 500,000, especially the landless and marginal and small farmers, of their basic needs of fodder for cattle and sheep, fuelwood for cooking, small timber for agricultural implements, raw material for rural artisans, like basket and mat weavers, and fruits for the poor.^{2,3}

In the 1990s, the Ministry of Environment and Forest (led by Kamal Nath, the Union Minister of Environment and Forests) attempted to give 2 million hectares (50 lakh acres) for captive consumption of paper and pulp industries^{4,5} by amending the National Forest Policy, 1988 and the Conservation of Forests Act, 1980. This would have resulted in the destruction of forests with large scale felling of trees by the timber mafia, illegal mining and so on especially in the Bastar region in Madhya Pradesh in the 1990s.^{10,11} It could have possibly choked off the origin of three rivers at Gangamul in the Western Ghats by giving prior permission for prospective mining in Kudremukh National Park and illegal tree felling and mining in Mahadayi Valley, right in the heart of the Western Ghats.

There have been some worthwhile efforts by SPS and other NGOs associated with the common lands movement to regreen common lands with the active involvement of local people, especially the poor, through village forest committees (VFCs). The effort at natural regeneration

was guided by five principles, viz., (i) meeting survival needs of the poor, (ii) equity between sections of the society, (iii) sustainability of development process (socially, economically and environmentally), (iv) democracy in planning and management (eg gram sabha) and (v) social justice.

These efforts received widespread recognition, including the highest award of the MoEF, called the Indira Gandhi Paryavaran Puraskar and the Van Mitra Award to the VFC of Kumaranahalli in Harapanahalli taluka, Davanagere district.^{6,9,17} This experience led to our two-pronged approach to establish community control over natural resources and empower gram sabhas, and a deeper understanding of the very concepts of 'progress' and 'civilization'.

It is a matter of some satisfaction that the people's movement for common lands in Karnataka (1984 to 1992) spearheaded by the SPS, the national campaign for protection of common lands (1992 to date) spearheaded by the national network called the national committee for protection of natural resources (NCPNR) and the efforts in Bastar region^{10,11} – through effective legal intervention in the Supreme Court (by the I.A. filed by the author with the help of Ekta Parishad and NCPNR in W.P. No 202 of 1995) – succeeded in their attempts to protect common lands for people's livelihood needs (against privatization by industrial and commercial forces, including the powerful timber mafia).^{16,17}

However, we now face a major threat from international forces, especially the World Bank and multinational corporations who are trying to bring the corporate sector into the forest areas in the name of 'efficiency', 'technical input' and 'financial investments'. Undoubtedly, this will be at

enormous cost to the rural poor and tribals who are dependent for their survival on these common lands

This threat prompted a concerned, high ranking government official, N C Saxena, to ask an important question 'In the ultimate analysis the question to be asked is whether the claim of the industry over forestry lands is based on sound economic rationale or is it a seductive myth and a ploy to grab the good quality forest lands,' (*The Indian Express*, 24 08 1994) Saxena delivered the keynote address at the national workshop on Forest Lands Issues held at Bangalore in August 1995, the proceedings of which are published in the book, *Forest Land and Forest Produce as if People Mattered*. From our experience with the local common communities, as is the case with many others in different parts of India, the empowerment of gram sabha and community control over natural resources seem to be the best instruments to fight these global forces of privatization

The Karnataka Pulpwood Ltd (KPL) was the issue where we got centrally involved through an effective people's movement. It was over the question of eucalyptus or commercial species and more importantly, the deeper questions of land – who controls it, who decides what species to plant and who benefits from them. It was an enormous learning experience.

In this process, we also came to question the role of the forest department and other government machinery. Whose side do they normally take in a conflict between the rural poor and industry on issues of forestry and common lands? We also learnt about the constitutional provisions for establishing people's rights over natural resources and how to further promote them. This helped us work out a more

comprehensive strategy to deal with the various issues of common lands, including the KPL issue.

It was the combination of a powerful people's movement for protection of common lands supported by scientific studies, filing of a public interest litigation in the Supreme Court of India (W P No 35 of 1987), mobilizing support among the legislators and other people's representatives at panchayat and grassroots levels and, equally important, advocacy efforts with the concerned bankers and government officials, that finally led to the success of the people's movement for common lands and to the closure of KPL. This story has been narrated in the book, *Quest for Justice*.²

Some of the other activities we have been involved with are the social forestry plantation (eucalyptus and acacia) in Medleri village, Save the Western Ghats March (SWGIM), over 3000 km in 1987-88, Medleri integrated wasteland development project in Ranabennur taluka (1992-95) and more recently, natural regeneration of common lands in Kusnur and Kumaranahalli clusters of villages, Karnataka.⁹ These have further contributed to our understanding of the issues of common lands and provided useful insights into the social and economic aspects of eucalyptus and other commercial plantations and their impact on the rural poor, the tribals and their environment.

The low cost but effective afforestation of the common lands, including those reclaimed from KPL, measures such as social fencing, firelining and natural regeneration is described in the article, 'Moving Mountains' (*Deccan Herald*, August 1999) and in *Grassroots* by the veteran journalist Ajit Bhattacharjee, who extensively covered the common lands movement against KPL.^{9,10}

These experiences led us to understand the dependence of the rural poor, including tribal communities, on common lands and also gave insights into historical developments relating to common lands and forestry issues. For example, during our struggle we learnt about the significant role of common lands in the life of the rural poor through the comprehensive study of N S Jodha ('Common Property Resources and Rural Poor in Dry Regions of India', EPW, 5 July 1986). This important study described the significant contribution of common property resources in employment and income generation and how the poor are worse off due to privatization of CPRs in the following words:

Common Property Resources (CPRs), though neglected by policy-makers and planners, play a significant role in the life of the rural poor. The paper is part of a larger study on the role of CPRs in farming system of dry areas of India which attempts to quantify the extent to which the rural poor benefit from CPRs. Based on data from over 80 villages in 21 districts in the dry regions of seven states, the study reveals significant contribution of CPRs towards the employment and income generation for the rural poor, i.e. labour and small farm households. The per household per year income derived from CPRs ranged between Rs 530 and Rs 830 in different areas. This is higher than the income generated by a number of anti-poverty programmes in some areas. The dependence of richer households on CPRs is much lower.

Despite contributions of CPRs, their area and productivity are declining in all the regions. The area of CPRs has declined by 26-63% during last three decades. Large scale privatization of CPRs has also taken place. Though the privatization of CPRs was done mainly to help the poor, 49-86%

of the privatized CPRs have ended up in the hands of the non-poor in different areas. Further, most of the land received by the poor households was given up by them as they lacked complementary resources to develop and use the newly received lands. Thus, the rural poor collectively lost a significant part of the source of their subsistence through the decline of CPRs. This loss does not seem to be compensated by privatized CPR lands given to (or retained by) them. The situation calls for greater attention to CPRs as a part of the anti-poverty strategy.

Sensitive British officers in the last century, like Captain James Forsyth who worked in the Central Provinces and Berar, had cautioned against an unthinking application of western forestry models to India. He stated, 'The danger is that a purely professional view of forest question may be allowed to exclude considerations bearing powerfully on the general economy of the masses of the people, particularly hill tribes.' Another example is the statement by the Collector of Kurnool during the debates on the second Indian Forest Act of 1878, that, 'Section 26 of the Act would inflict great hardship on hundreds of women whose only means of livelihood for several months of the year consists in gathering for sale of jungle produce. Inconvenience will also be felt by native doctors, most of whose medicines are found in the forests, probably at the very season when the forests may be closed'.⁵

Social thinkers like Jyotiba Phule as early as 1882 in his Marathi book, *Shetkaryacha Aasud* (Cultivator's Whipcord) expressed

'In the past the peasants who had small pieces of land and who couldn't eke out enough from it for their survival used to eat fruits from the nearby forests and used to collect leaves,

flowers and dried tree branches and by selling these to others supplemented their income. They also used to maintain a couple of cows or goats and were living happily in their villages depending on the village grazing land. But HMs government's conspiratorial bureaucracy have used their foreign intelligence and have newly established the great forest department and have incorporated all mountains, hills, valleys along with barren lands, and village common grazing lands in the department, thus making it impossible for the goats of the poor peasants to find even breathing space in the forests.'

Thousands of protest movements including well-known tribal rebellions from the late 1700s to 1907 led by respected leaders like Tilka Manjhi, Sidhu Kanhu, Birsa Munda to protect their land, forests, wholesome lifestyle, which do not find an important place in regular history books, need to be studied in detail. The spirit of these efforts was to protect natural resources. There is a need to inculcate this in younger minds. However, the assault on the country's common property resources (CPRs) like the forests, grazing lands, tanks and ponds continued even after Independence, with continued, disastrous consequences. We now have only 11% of land under good tree cover. The continued deforestation has led to a siltation of dams, recurrent devastating floods and an overall scarcity of water in dry seasons. It has also led to starvation of people living on forest produce, which is reflected in the increase in deaths, particularly of children in forest areas.

Our national freedom movement succeeded in incorporating into the national agenda the rights of small and marginal farmers (land to the tiller) and industrial workers (factory

to the worker). However, the greatest challenge that we all face today, is to establish the 'Rights of people over natural resources'.

The sustained efforts of protest movements by people and voluntary organizations, especially in the decades of the 1970s and '80s, have had an impact on the concerned government officials and policy-makers. The three major successful movements that contributed significantly to these developments are the Chipko Movement in the Himalaya led by the Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal (DGSM), Gopeshwar, Chamoli district, U P, the Common Lands Movement led by the Samaj Parivartana Samudaya (SPS), Dharwad, Karnataka and the Save the Silent Valley Campaign led by Kerala Sastha Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), Trivandrum, Kerala. All three have received widespread acclaim including the Indira Gandhi Paryavaran Puraskar by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

These developments, including the debate on the draft Forest Bill in 1982 and the well-known Save the Western Ghats March (SWGIM), from 1 November 1987 to 30 January 1988 led to the unanimous adoption by Parliament of the enlightened National Forest Policy in December 1988. The two major objectives of this policy are to maintain ecological stability and meeting the basic needs of people living in and around the forests. The policy further emphasizes that having regard to the symbiotic relationship between the tribal people and forest, the local communities living in and around forests should be involved in the protection, regeneration and development of forests and have the first charge on forest produce like fodder, fuelwood and raw material for rural artisans. The policy also pro-

hibits leasing of forest lands to industry for captive plantations

The National Forest Policy 1988 is an important landmark. It marks a major departure from the earlier commercially oriented policies of 1894 and 1952. This, however, requires a radical change from earlier bureaucratic forest management practice established by the British in 1860, a mentality which still dominates the mindset of foresters. The key issues involved in the forestry sector were presented to selected MPs and political party leaders at a seminar in February 1996 as part of Jan Vikas Andolan's national campaign.¹⁴

Even though we became independent in 1947, the policies and programmes we pursued have benefited only a small segment of the society. However, vast sections of people especially those who are dependent on natural resources and an increasing number of slum dwellers in the urban areas have been further impoverished. The natural resource base has been further eroded with increasing deforestation and through the stranglehold of powerful forces both Indian and foreign, who are overexploiting them in an unsustainable way.

There is a continuing and ever increasing migration of tribals and rural poor who have often been evicted more than once from their homes. This has been done in the name of 'development' and 'scientific management' of natural resources like big dams, power plants and other mega industrial and commercial ventures, and the creation of protected areas (national parks and sanctuaries).

One of the major challenges facing us is to recognise people's rights over natural resources. The tribals, fish workers and other rural poor must have greater control over their land, water and forests, which have been

sustained over the centuries through utilizing them in a frugal and sustainable way. The continued systematic assault on these common property resources (CPRs), in the name of development and scientific management have most seriously threatened the very survival base of vast sections of people.

It is essential to emphasize that the rights of people always enumerate from the responsibilities they shoulder. The tribals, fisherfolk and rural poor derive their rights from the responsibilities that they have shouldered over centuries, of protecting biodiversity against heavy odds and utilized these resources in a frugal and sustainable way.

It is essential to recognize the rights of the deprived sections of the people over natural resources that they have tried to protect against heavy odds. In other words, we have to accept perhaps the greatest challenge to us social activists, scientists and others concerned about the future of this country – to put people's rights over natural resources within the precept of self-rule (swarajya) on the national agenda. As stated in the statement of shared concern at the beginning of this article, we have to evolve new community control systems that are suitable to the present complex situation.

It is through such an analysis of the historical developments and understanding of the present situation, that a national campaign called *Azaadi Se Swarajya* was launched on the midnight of 14-15 August 1996, on the eve of the 50th year of Independence, by Jan Vikas Andolan (JVA), a national network of people's movements, organizations and individuals.¹⁵ It has addressed these issues from the grassroot to policy level in a broader context.

The concept of self-rule contained in the panchayat raj legislation (73rd and 74th Amendment to the Constitution) and the Bhuria Committee Report (for tribal areas) which was implemented through enactment of Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA-96) embodies to an extent the rights of the people over national resources in a broader way. It is essential to strengthen and deepen this process and spread it through empowerment of gram sabhas by amending the state panchayat raj acts. Gram Ganarajya Vedike (GGV) is spearheading a people's movement in Karnataka in this regard. Further, it is essential that we study tribal history carefully, first to document the true history as it happened and second, to derive inspiration from their protests and heroic struggles. It is also necessary to understand the concept of self-rule as reflected in the actions and writings of persons like Jyotiba Phule, Birsu Munda, M K Gandhi, M N Roy and J P Narayan.

All these experiences have led us to understand these issues in-depth and redefine the notions of the development process, progress and civilization, as our national poet Rabindranath Tagore did in a lecture he delivered in China in 1924.

'We have for over a century been dragged by the prosperous West behind its chariot, choked by the dust, deafened by the noise, humbled by our own helplessness and overwhelmed by the speed. We agreed to acknowledge that this chariot drive was progress and that progress was civilization. If we even ventured to ask, "progress towards what and progress for whom," it was considered to be peculiarly and ridiculous or oriental to entertain such doubts about the absoluteness of progress. Of late, a voice

has come bidding us to take count not only of the scientific perfection of the chariot but of the depth of the ditches lying across its path'¹⁸

The above statement assumes much greater significance at this crucial time in our history when powerful forces like the MNCs in the name of liberalization and globalization, are trying to enslave us with the help of our own elite ruling class. The youth who are being brainwashed into joining the rich through allurements, including messages in the electronic media, need to think through what is happening, especially after 50 years of the adoption of the Constitution.

The forces of pseudo progress which entered this country in the form of an East India Company are at work again in a more concerted way than ever before to enslave Third World countries and instruments like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organizations (WTO) and World Bank are being fine-tuned to achieve the job. These institutions are jealously protecting the dominant paradigm of development.

'The tussle about what the WDR should and should not emphasize demonstrates that there are forces inside and outside the World Bank hostile to even a modest modification of the dominant paradigm on development. The Bank may want to signal that it is turning into a caring organization but, like a leopard and its spots, it cannot change even if it wants to' (*The Hindu*, 26 June 2000).

'At the World Bank, the high church of development economics, a widening schism over how to fight poverty is sending ripples around the world. Ravi Kanbur, a top Cornell economist and the man hired by the Bank to oversee the writing of its World Development Report, resigned in anger recently when he was ordered

to rewrite his staff's draft. The report is extremely influential among economists, and Mr Kanbur's version questioned how well developing countries adapt to capitalism. In fact, it questioned whether the West's standard prescription for reform does enough to help the poor' (*The New York Times*, 25 June 2000).

As M K Gandhi had clearly stated, 'Real swarajya will not come by the acquisition of power by the few but by the capacity of the many to resist when power is abused'.

Western civilization and the forces of globalization, liberalization and privatization have concentrated enormous power in a few hands at enormous cost to the vast sections of poor and tribal communities. This power is being misused to make the poor poorer and invade a wholesome lifestyle and culture of humane societies.

In other words, the last man who should occupy the central place in our development paradigm is systematically marginalised and eliminated. The fact that our own democratic governments have since 1947 evicted 15 crore rural poor from their homes and habitats in the name of 'national development' and that even after 50 years of adoption of the Constitution we do not have a rehabilitation policy is a sad commentary. There is need to give legal protection to the rural poor by incorporating key features into the land acquisition bill itself. The efforts by voluntary agencies who worked out alternate forest, land acquisition and rehabilitation bills are unfortunately not being recognized and the interest of these vulnerable communities not protected.^{15 16}

This has to be protested and fought with both non-violent direct action¹² and the constructive instruments of people's rights over natural

resources and 'empowered gram sabhas'.

References

- 1 Anil Agrawal et al (ed) *State of India's Environment, 1984-85, Second Citizen's Report*. Centre for Science and Environment New Delhi, 1985
- 2 Sadanand Kanavalli et al 'Quest for Justice', Samaj Parivartana Samudaya (SPS), Dharwad, 1993
- 3 SPS et al 'Whither Common Lands?' 1989
- 4 Ramachandra Guha et al *World Environmentalism, A Global History* Oxford University Press, 1997
- 5 S R Hiremath (ed) *Forest Lands and Forest Produce as it People Mattered* NCPNR 1997
- 6 Charlie Pye Smith *In Search of Wild India* UBS Publishers and Distributors, London U K, 1993 pp 177-181
- 7 S R Hiremath, SPS et al (ed), *All About Forest Draft Bill and Forest Lands*
- 8 N C Saxena et al, *Western Ghats Forestry Project, Independent Study of Implementation Experience in Uttar Kannada Circle* May 1997
- 9 Ajit Bhattacharjee, 'Moving Mountains', *Deccan Herald*, 13 August 1999
- 10 Ajit Bhattacharjee, 'Timber Mafia and Supreme Court', *Grassroots* November 1999, Press Institute of India
- 11 Common Lands, Timber Mafia and Tribal Communities in Bastar Region. Keynote address at the National Workshop on Tribals and Forests, Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal (unpublished)
- 12 Paul Kunen, 'Commercialization of Common Property Resources: Kusnur Satyagraha', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 16 January 1988, pp 73-74
- 13 *Azaadi Se Swarajya*, Jan Vikas Andolan, 1996
- 14 People's Rights Over Natural Resources - putting it on the national agenda, Jagrut Van SPS, March 1996
- 15 SPS et al Amended Draft Forest Bill, 1995 (Draft by Voluntary Organizations), 1995
- 16 SPS et al The Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2000 (Draft by Voluntary Organizations) June 2000
- 17 *State of the World 1989* Worldwatch Institute Washington D C USA (Protecting the Earth) p 165
- 18 Lectures and Addresses of Rabindranath Tagore Macmillan Pocket Series

Economic potential

M V NADKARNI

TO understand the economic significance and potential of 'wastelands', we must shed the notion that they are wastelands! The categories in official land use statistics like 'cultivable wastes', 'uncultivable wastes', 'permanent fallows' (other than current fallows), and even some of the 'barren and uncultivable lands' have served local communities by providing grazing facilities and fodder, fuelwood, leaf manure, wild fruit, small game (like rabbit), leaf manure, building and fencing materials, wood for agricultural implements and so on.

Since these goods are available free, except for the labour involved, the rural poor receive a larger proportion of their total needs and income from them than the non-poor, and as such these 'wastelands' are of special economic significance to them. The non-reserve forests ('protected' forests) which account for about 46% of area under forests, have also served the same purpose and are generally in a more degraded state than the reserve forests. Thus, they can more rightly be clubbed together with wastelands and all be called as the common property resources (CPRs).

Yet, the connotation of 'wastelands' is strictly not the same as that of CPRs. While the former indicates a physical state of degradation, the latter refers to legal status (even if local

communities do not strictly possess legal titles, since these lands are generally owned by the government). In practice, however, there is a great degree of overlap between them, so much so that even reserve forests, closely controlled by the government but near local communities, and privately owned/possessed degraded lands are often used as CPRs, with or without the permission of the owners.

It is difficult to decide whether the degraded status of these lands is the cause or a consequence of their being used as CPRs. Wherever the lands were fertile they were either brought under cultivation or tree cover with exclusive control (again, either as commercial plantation for private benefit or as reserve forests), and only relatively degraded lands were left for community use. Under such circumstances, the degraded status is the cause and the preceding circumstance to their being used as CPRs. However, where no proper collective management existed, the collective use could have led to over-exploitation and hence to further degradation.

The breakdown of collective management at the local level was a part of the process of commercialisation and pressure on land. The story of the decline of the CPRs both in quantity and quality at the micro level is

well documented in India (Jodha 1985-a, 1985-b, Damodaran 1987, Nadkarni et al 1989, Iyengar 1989, Nadkarni and Pasha 1991). If the degraded status of these lands is both the cause and consequence of their being used as CPRs, it is tempting to take it as indicative of a vicious circle operating. However, this is valid only where collective management has broken down. Moreover, we cannot generalise to the extent of conceptualising all environmental problems in terms of a vicious circle (Nadkarni 2000).

How then do we look at the economics of 'wastelands' used as CPRs? One way of looking at them is as an underutilised natural resource capable of development or regeneration to reach their full production potential (Vohra 1973 and 1980, Nadkarni and Deshpande 1979, Romm 1981). In a land scarce country like India, keeping such a precious resource in a degraded state would seem irrational. They indicate a development frontier beckoning to be opened (Romm 1981).

Though these lands have contributed to the local economies of people, particularly the poor, the consensus of scholars seemed to be that their productivity fell below their productive potential thanks to the neglect of conscious management for sustainable use after the sway of market forces and private economies accelerated. Many forestry projects were initiated in the country precisely with the objective of regenerating these lands so that they could better meet the needs of the local people for bio-mass. In the process of meeting these needs, two further indirect economic cum environmental benefits were sought: reducing the pressure on reserve forests and checking deforestation, helping soil and water conservation.

This raises three questions, inter-linked with each other: (a) Is it economically viable to regenerate these lands? (b) Even if viable, what are the institutional constraints to realise their full potential? (c) What are the alternative goals or objectives of their regeneration? By whom and how is the question of choice between alternative uses decided?

In discussing these questions, it is pertinent to keep in mind the distinction between economics of wastelands meant to be made use of to meet people's needs on the one hand and economics of forests proper (e.g. reserve forests) and conservation parks on the other. While direct economic considerations dominate the first with the environmental benefits being incidental, the environmental considerations dominate the latter with direct economic benefits being incidental. We are concerned here with the economics of wastelands. (For a discussion of economics of forests vis-à-vis people, see Nadkarni 1996: 1-24.)

The question of economic viability must be distinguished from financial or commercial viability. In terms of the former, the basic question is whether total benefits exceed total costs. Not only do the direct benefits like fuelwood, timber, fodder and fruits have to be valued in economic viability analysis, but also indirect and non-monetary benefits from soil and water conservation going to neighbouring areas as positive externalities. Similarly, costs include not only direct and monetary costs, but also indirect and non-monetary costs like the opportunity cost of land in terms of grazing opportunity foregone, to the extent that free grazing is not permitted when wastelands are regenerated.

In a financial viability analysis, not only indirect benefits, but also

direct benefits consumed at source (without depending on the market) may be ignored and only cash returns considered. The objective here is to judge whether the costs or investments are recovered from the cash in-flows, i.e. whether the project is 'bankable'. An outside investor giving loans for regeneration may view it from this point as well, in addition to economic viability. In financial viability analysis, it is not necessary to include the opportunity cost in terms of grazing facility foregone, and only direct and monetary costs need to be reckoned.

The rate of discount in financial viability analysis must normally be the same as the market rate of interest at least as prevailing in the formal banking sector, if not the high rates in the informal sector. In economic viability analysis, however, the rate of discount can be much lower. We have, however, used the same rate of discount for both. It may be noted that a rate of discount is required to convert the cash flows or the estimated value flows to their present value. Cash flows of different periods are not comparable because they need to be at real or inflation-adjusted prices, and even where they are at real prices, they are subject to time preference.

Time preference may include some risk premium as future returns are to an extent uncertain. For example, what if local people do not allow regeneration, making the investment in regeneration a wasteful proposition? The standard practice in India is to use fairly high discount rates such as 12% even in social cost benefit analysis, which is unjustifiably high if the cash flows are in real terms. Such a rate of discount is too high even for financial viability analysis if based on cash flows in real terms. It is enough in such cases if the rate of

discount reflects only the rate of time-preference and a risk premium

If there is a conflict between the two types of analyses, it is of course up to the investor to decide whether she should go by economic or financial analysis. However, while financial or commercial analysis is more relevant in private or farmers' own holdings, economic viability analysis with a broader perspective is more relevant for common lands. Nevertheless, social costs cannot be ignored even in private enterprises.

It would be pertinent to present a few important findings from a study of economic and financial viability analysis conducted in early 1990. The methodology was first tried for five social forestry projects. The results were encouraging, showing the projects to be viable both in economic and financial terms (Nadkarni et al 1992). The study was extended to cover eight more social forestry projects which confirmed the earlier results. The combined results for all 13 projects were published by SPWD and the Ford Foundation (Nadkarni et al 1994).

The 13 social forestry projects were from different parts of Karnataka – from heavy rainfall to semi-arid regions, both in South and North Karnataka. They also represented different production patterns, some with an emphasis on commercial species, some with no particular priority and having a wide mix, and at least one with low density of trees but with more grass cover. Some were recent and some started about five years back and are fairly established, the earliest started in 1985-86 and the latest in 1988-89.

It was not possible to take into account actual cutting of timber, since the trees had not matured for cutting. But actual cutting of grass and esti-

mated (expected) annual cutting of branches of trees for fuelwood were taken into account. We also included in the benefits what value the trees would yield (at constant or base year prices) when they are finally cut (after maturity, not exceeding 40 years). Grass and green manure were included only to the extent that they were found to be or were expected to be harvested over the time period of 40 years, and not the value of all the leaves and grass produced.

Only that part of the bio-mass is valued which was used or expected to be used. Indirect benefits like the value of the impact on soil and water conservation reflected in increased agricultural yields were not included due to nonavailability of reliable information. However, even in terms of direct benefits alone the projects were found to be economically (if not financially) viable. When they passed a more restrictive or stringent criterion, they would pass a less stringent criterion as well. The prices used for valuing the benefits were those prevailing in the concerned villages themselves.

Where market or actual prices were not quoted, they were based on what the villagers were prepared to pay to obtain bio-mass like small wood if it was not available free from the common lands. Grass was valued at Rs 271 per tonne which was lower than the market price for crop residues used as fodder. There was no market for the type of grass grown in social forestry projects. Even if grass fetched no price in the market, it had economic value in terms of the contribution it made to animal husbandry.

The basis for the price of Rs 271 per tonne is that it turned out to be the marginal value product, derived from a linear production function fitted to a cross section of animal holdings of farmers in a semi-arid region of Kolar,

taken from the Ph D thesis of S A Pasha on the 'Economics of Small Ruminants' prepared at ISEC. The valuation of free fodder, however, was not included in financial viability analysis, except in the project which was specifically a fodder plantation. A sensitivity analysis was also carried out valuing benefits at full expected value as against only half its value.

On the cost side we included not only the initial overheads like civil works but also recurring costs of maintenance and watch and, what is more, opportunity cost of grazing benefits foregone by local people. We have reckoned this opportunity cost as arising throughout the project life. This made our analysis more stringent. The grass and other fodder harvested by local people, which more than offsets the grazing facility foregone, is included on the side of benefits. In financial viability analysis, only benefits in the form of timber and grass expected to be sold or products of commercial value were included and not all products.

We present briefly the findings of only two projects for illustration, taking Sathenhally project in Tumkur district which was mainly a fodder plantation with the lowest density trees (222 trees per hectare) among all projects (and therefore its economic and financial viability was doubted) and, Kolar project in Bangalore district which had mainly commercial species like eucalyptus and casurina with a high density of trees (1990 per hectare). Both the projects were in semi-arid tracts, and had no benefit of irrigation.

All the projects were taken up with an understanding with the villagers concerned that their cooperation would be available in regeneration and protection, and free grazing in the project areas would not be allowed till

the trees grow up to a certain nonbrowsable height. The findings for the two projects are given in Table 1 below.

The two projects present two extremes, the fodder oriented Sathenhally project showing much less economic and financial viability than the Kolur project oriented to commercial species, as was expected. This was so even after taking into account the contribution that grass makes to the value addition in animal husbandry, though it had no market price. However, what is remarkable is that Sathenhally project was found to be economically viable even when only half of the expected benefits of the projects were assumed to be realised. It passed even the financial viability test at the full benefits expected, but not when only half of the expected benefits were assumed to be realised. The other project which is much more commer-

cially oriented, however, passed both the economic and financial viability test under both alternative assumptions about the benefits.

The results show an inherent dilemma in any project of regenerating wastelands. Focusing on commercial species would make it economically attractive, but irrelevant to people and could even provoke their resistance. Focusing on fodder could benefit local people more, but may not be economically very attractive. A balanced mix acceptable to the local people could help in overcoming the dilemma. More on this issue a little later.

Our findings, published earlier, received critical comment on the following aspects. First, the densities of trees in projects excluding Sathenhally were not such as to yield full benefits expected of a tree, they may have planted high densities on the

assumption that not all trees would survive. That is why we also carried out a sensitivity analysis under which both the alternative assumptions of full benefits and half benefits were tried as indicated above.

Second, NPV looked so large as to make tree plantations more attractive than annual crops. It should be noted, however, that the NPV here is for the whole project life of 40 years together, and not for each year. The third criticism was that the cost of land was not taken. This was because they were waste lands and had no market as such. However, we did take into account the opportunity cost of the project in the form of grazing benefit foregone for the village people.

Last, a low rate of discount was used to derive NPV (3% for first 10 years, 5% for the next 10 years and 8% for the last 20 years), which is lower than the routine rates like 12% used in social cost benefit in India. The justification for using a lower rate is already given above, and in any case the internal rates of return were also derived.

It is necessary to clarify, however, that the benefits reckoned in the above analysis are on the assumption that the necessary cooperation from the people of the concerned villages is forthcoming in protecting the projects and making sustainable use of them. It is just possible that some of the project sites may later have reverted to their degraded pre-project state when no such cooperation was forthcoming and free grazing was resumed. In such cases, the investment in social forestry projects would be a waste. That is why there is so much emphasis on people's participation in such projects.

One of the major problems in such participation is to decide on the objectives of the project. A commer-

TABLE 1

Economic and Financial Viability of Two Social Forestry Projects		
	<i>Sathenhally</i>	<i>Kolur</i>
1 Product pattern and density of trees	Mainly fodder, fruits, and fuelwood trees (222 per hectare)	Mainly commercial trees eucalyptus and casurina (1990 per hectare)
2 Implementing Agencies	DLDB	Forest Department
3 Project Area in hectares	60	201
<i>Economic Viability</i>		
4 Net present value per hectare (In Rs '000) at 1989-90 prices		
At full benefits expected	44.0	415.0
Only half benefits realised	7.0	188.0
5 Internal Rate of Return (%)		
At full benefits expected	21.9	28.3
Only half benefits realised	10.4	22.6
<i>Financial Viability</i>		
6 Net present value per hectare (In Rs '000) at 1989-90 prices		
At full benefits expected	8.0	280.0
Only half benefits realised	-4.0	127.0
7 Internal Rate of Return (%)		
At full benefits expected	11.8	25.5
Only half benefits realised	Negative	21.3

Notes: Project life is assumed to be 40 years. NPV here is not per year, but for the whole project life. A variable discount rate of 3% for the first 10 years, 5% for the next 10 years, and 8% for the remaining 20 years, is used for deriving NPV.

Source: Nadkarni et al. 1992 and 1994.

cial plantation on a common land may be tempting in narrow financial terms, but if the costs of exclusion or protection are high, it may not yield the expected results. But even purely grass oriented projects can be economically viable, even if not financially so, as our above analysis has shown. Instead of having purely commercial plantations which local people may resist and not allow, it is more prudent to have what they want and would allow, as decided by the consensus in village meetings. They may allow even commercial or timber species to an extent, if the concerned village benefits from them.

After all, in a case like planning for the regeneration of common lands, the goals of regeneration have to be decided by the beneficiaries themselves. It is, therefore, crucial to attend to institutional questions of formalising and ensuring people's participation for the whole project life. The question of equity naturally arises here which could be settled by ensuring equal rights to bio-mass on per household basis. These questions have been discussed in the literature on the subject, with illustrations of actual case studies (e.g. Nadkarni 1990, Chopra, Kadekodi and Murty 1990).

The institutional question cannot be avoided even when the 'wastelands' are in private possession. Their regeneration may need considerable investment which may sound uneconomical for private individuals, especially if cost of exclusion and protection are high. Also, the party may not have the required funds.

There are the uncertainties to be reckoned with, particularly when the land is encroached and there is a risk of the government not regularising ownership. In such a case, there is no incentive for a private party to undertake long term investment. The state

governments are reluctant to liberally regularise encroachments just to give such an incentive, because that would be an open invitation to all the encroachers on CPRs and forests and especially to the powerful village elite who will take full advantage of such a situation.

An example of how the problem of regenerating privately held wastelands was overcome by an NGO (Myrada) in Karnataka may be mentioned. In the PIDOW project in Kamalapur watershed in Gulbarga district, most of the wastelands were privately held by farmers, awaiting regularisation. There being no interest in regenerating them on the part of farmers with their own resources, PIDOW took up this task on the condition that one-third of the output from such lands would be contributed by farmers to a common fund of the village sangha or association.

The contribution in the form of grass harvested was distributed to other households who helped in harvesting it. If the usufruct or timber is sold, one-third of the cash proceeds are to be credited to the common fund for village development. There was a threat of social boycott from the village if the party went back on its commitment after regeneration (cf. Nadkarni 1990:49).

There is no end to ingenuity in social engineering and it should be possible to realise the full productive potential of the so-called wastelands in meeting people's needs. The constraints in this are not so much on the side of economic viability as on the institutional.

References

Chopra, K., G. K. Kadekodi and M. N. Murty (1990) *Participatory Development: An Approach to the Management of CPRs*, Sage, New Delhi.

Damodaran, A. (1987) 'Structural Dimensions of Fodder Crises: A village study in Karnataka', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28 March (Review of Agriculture) A-16-22.

Iyengar, Sudarshan (1989) 'Common Property Land Resources in Gujarat: some findings about their size, status and use', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2 June (Review of Agriculture) A-67-78.

Jodha, N. S. (1985-a) 'Population Growth and Decline of CPRs in Rajasthan, India', *Population and Development Review* 11(2): 247-264.

Jodha, N. S. (1985-b) 'Market Forces and Erosion of CPRs', in *Agricultural Markets in Semi-Arid Tropics*, ICRISAT, Patancheru 263-277.

Nadkarni, M. V. (1990) 'Use and Management of Common Lands: towards an environmentally sound strategy', in *Karnataka State of Environment Report IV*, edited by Cecil Saldanha, Centre for Taxonomic Studies, Bangalore.

Nadkarni, M. V. (1996) 'Forests, People and Economics', *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics* 51(142), January-June.

Nadkarni, M. V. (2000) 'Poverty, Environment, Development: A many-patterned nexus', *Economic and Political Weekly* 35(14), 1 April, pp. 1184-1190.

Nadkarni, M. V. and R. S. Deshpande (1979) 'Underutilisation of Land: climatic or institutional factors?' *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics* 34(2): 1-16.

Nadkarni, M. V., K. N. Ninan and S. A. Pasha (1992) 'Social Forestry Projects in Karnataka: an economic and financial viability analysis', *Economic and Political Weekly* 27(26), 27 July, A-65-74.

Nadkarni, M. V., K. N. Ninan and S. A. Pasha (1994) 'The Economic and Financial Viability of Social Forestry Projects: A Study of Selected Projects in Karnataka', Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development and Ford Foundation, working paper no. 16 under Joint Forest Management, New Delhi.

Nadkarni, M. V. and S. A. Pasha (1991) 'Developing Uncultivated Lands: some issues from the Karnataka experience', *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics* 46(4), October-December, 543-554.

Nadkarni, M. V. with S. A. Pasha and L. S. Prabhakar (1989) *Political Economy of Forest Use and Management*, Sage, New Delhi.

Romm, Jeff (1981) 'The Uncultivated Half of India', *The Indian Forester* 17(1&2), January and February.

Vohra, B. B. (1973) 'A Charter for Land', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31 March.

Vohra, B. B. (1980) 'A Land and Water Policy for India', Sardar Patel Memorial Lectures, Publications Division, GOI, New Delhi.

The Gujarat experience

SUDARSHAN IYENGAR

THOUGH Gujarat state is ranked fourth in terms of per capita income, its agricultural performance is poor. The performance has in it a story of degrading status of land and water resources that support agriculture. If Gujarat wishes to undertake sustainable development of its land and water resources, it will have to arrest overexploitation and degradation if not improve their status.

The state has no dearth of land, with 19.60 million hectares of total geographical area, Gujarat is the seventh largest state in India. The reporting area is 18.83 million hectares for which land use statistics are available. Per capita land availability in Gujarat is about 43% higher than the all India figure. In 1991, the per capita land available in Gujarat was 0.70 ha. The all India figure was 0.49 ha.

It is generally believed that Gujarat and other semi-arid and arid regions in the country have large areas of uncultivated wastelands and they offer good scope for development. Improving the status of wastelands will add to the productivity of the area under cultivation and the income generating potential of the wastelands in itself would be augmented. This article attempts to review the status of wastelands in Gujarat and related issues.

A little less than half of Gujarat's land lies uncultivated. During 1994-96, the area under cultivation in Gujarat was 51% of the total reporting area. 49% of land in the state was uncultivated of which 6% was under non-agricultural use, 14% was barren and uncultivable, 10% forest, 4% grazing and pasture land, and 15%

cultivable waste. The distribution is likely to have remained more or less the same as per the land records. At the all India level, total uncultivable land inclusive of all categories constituted 44% in 1994-96. Of that 14% was barren and uncultivable, about 21% was forest and 9% pastures and cultivable waste.

These records originate in the land use statistics generated by the agriculture department. With Remote Sensing (RS) technology it has become possible to identify and classify land according to its status. Unfortunately, land use statistics and the records created from the remote sensing exercise are not tallied. Thus there may arise a serious confusion in accounting for the land use. In the present article, I rely on the land use statistics generated by the agriculture department.

Barren and uncultivable land is a type of wasteland, whose regeneration is extremely resource intensive. Without major technological breakthroughs, economic use of this type of land is difficult and expensive. The scope for developing wastelands in Gujarat is thus limited to only 29% of the total land. Further, forests account for 10% of land. Forests are common lands of a special kind administered and managed by the forest department. A participatory forest protection programme, namely Joint Forest Management, was introduced for greening the degraded forest land. I do not intend to dwell upon this topic because forest land is not wasteland.

Overall, the wastelands effectively available for development account for 19% of the total reporting

area of the state. Though in percentage terms the area does not appear large, in absolute terms this accounts for about 3.6 million hectares which is substantial. An important feature of wastelands is that they are largely open access land used by all with very limited regulation. In the literature, wastelands are also referred to as common land or common property resources. I, however, shall continue to refer to them as wastelands.

Wastelands came into focus in the recent past with regard to two major concerns. One, the institutional arrangements which facilitated sustainable and regulated use of wastelands in the rural areas of arid and semi-arid regions in the past many centuries are fast breaking down. The traditional management and use of wastelands provided significant support to the poor and marginalised households not owning private land. Government programmes have had limited success in covering the marginalised rural poor households and providing them with effective income earning alternatives. Thus, with the failure of anti-poverty programmes and loss of wasteland based economic support the vulnerability of the poor, especially in arid and the semi-arid regions, has increased.

The second concern relates to the shrinking size and degrading status of the wastelands because apart from providing livelihood support to the poor, it is believed that the CPLRs also perform several useful ecological services. A reduction in the extent of wastelands is largely due to privatisation. Thus, with privatisation and degradation of wastelands, the health of both the ecology of the region and that of the poor households dependent upon CPLRs is in serious jeopardy. It is being argued that regeneration of degraded wastelands would not only

improve the performance of ecological services, it may also restore some of the income earning opportunities to the rural poor households.

Pioneering work in studying wastelands support to the poor has been done by N. S. Jodha. He was driven to this research by the survival capacity of the population in rural Tanzania during the severe drought of 1980. He then conducted research in 80 villages in 21 arid and semi-arid districts spread over seven states in India, including Gujarat in the mid-1980s. His studies revealed that wastelands contributed significantly towards employment and income of the poor. Per household income ranged between Rs 530 and Rs 830 in different areas. During the sixth five year plan period (1980-85), households earning less than Rs 4800 a year were considered to be the poorest of the poor, the poverty line income being Rs 6400 a year under the Integrated Rural Development Programme. The implication was that the poorest households earned between 11 and 17% of their total income from wastelands.

Several studies followed Jodha's. I examined the incidence and intensity of problems relating to CPLRs in 25 villages in Gujarat in 1987. The area under forest was excluded from the analysis. It was observed that as compared to the non-drought areas, the size of wastelands was higher in drought prone areas. Although the area under non-cultivated land had not significantly altered between 1961-62 and 1990-91, the area under gauchar or grazing land had declined. At the village level, the recorded area under uncultivated land also showed a decline. Dependence on wastelands for survival was higher in drought prone areas, but in all other areas the dependence was largely limited to grazing and fuelwood. The study also

observed that as the prospects for agriculture improved by way of increase in irrigation, the dependence of people on wastelands, including that of the poor, declined. The composition of livestock also changed in favour of buffaloes which are stall-fed. It was difficult to unequivocally establish whether the poor were affected more adversely due to decline in wastelands.

In her study of a semi-arid village in the saline, coastal region of Ahmedabad district, Martha Chen recorded a relatively large number of uses of wastelands in the late 1980s. She enumerated all wastelands used as common land, including waterbodies, and identified seven types which included permanent pastures (grazing land), village forests (effectively belonging to the forest department), village tanks, panchayat well, river, panchayat trees and private property land, wells and trees, fallow, threshing grounds and so on. She also listed types of trees and grasses available and their uses as fuel, fodder and food. She reported fuel and fodder as the main items which people got from wastelands. An important point that emerged from the study on access was that while in principle all villagers as residents of the village should have enjoyed unrestricted access, in actual practice there were several restrictions. The locally powerful forces either privatised or disallowed the less powerful from using the wastelands.

While Chen and I had concentrated on wastelands, many scholars treat forests as common land as well. In fact, it is only when dependence on forest is considered that we account for the various activities of collection, consumption and sale of forest based produce which fetch some income to the poor households. Thus, in this

review we include those studies which have tried to work out dependence of people on forest for income. R B Lal studied 13 villages of five tehsils in Gujarat. He found that the average earning per household was Rs 129 from the collection and sale of non-timber forest produce. Considering Rs 6,400 as annual income per household for those living below the poverty line, the share of income from common land forest and/or the wastelands worked out to a little above 2%. Another study of the four villages in Bharuch district by Kartikeya Sarabhai and his team from VIKSAT found that the non-timber produce from wastelands including forests contributed 38 to 46% of their total income. However, about 50% of it was the value of fuelwood and fodder.

During 1996-97, graduate students of the Gujarat Vidyapith in Ahmedabad undertook a study of wastelands in 15 villages in Gujarat spread in the north and south regions. In 11 out of 15 villages, the area under gauchar and fallow land had declined over time. In most villages, gauchar area was either encroached on or was allotted to scheduled caste and tribe households under the Indira Awas Yojna, a Government of India's housing scheme for the poor. In a semi-arid village, Mota Gorayya, large farmers extracted soil from gauchar for improving the fertility of their privately owned lands.

Most scholars have established some dependence of the poor and non-poor on wastelands in Gujarat, but the magnitude of dependence is small and varied. Some scholars attribute this to the decline in size and status of the wastelands over the last 40 years or so. I shall now turn my attention to the issue of the size of wastelands in Gujarat.

Social scientists have described the degraded status of the wastelands

in terms of impressions and perceptions of the people living in the study areas or by using certain indicators which help in describing degradation. The ecological implications of the degradation of wastelands at micro levels are yet to be worked out in detail. Except for Jodha who argues that because of the degradation of wastelands and its privatisation in arid Rajasthan, regular agriculture has suffered because changes in the status of wastelands has unleashed the desertification process.

At the macro level, there has been some attempt to quantify degradation of CPLRs. Most estimates are available at an all India level and the wastelands are variously defined. Thus, whenever a proportion is being mentioned, one has to be careful to ascertain the total from which the proportion has been worked out. Professor Kadekodi has elaborately discussed the issues involved in estimating the wastelands in India. The problem starts with the definition of wastelands. Three different definitions are used. One based on land productivity, second on ecological characteristics, and the third on both.

The Technical Group of the National Wasteland Development Board (NWDB) in its report of 1986 defined wastelands as follows: 'Wastelands mean degraded lands which can be brought under vegetative cover with reasonable effort and which is currently lying as under-utilised and land which is deteriorating for lack of appropriate water and soil management or on account of natural causes.' This definition is based on both land productivity and ecological characteristics.

Using different definitions for estimation of wastelands has its own problems. Since the definitions are not co-terminous with the land use clas-

sification of the agricultural department of the government, the total area under various estimates is not available. Consequently, scientists have tried to build robust estimates based on samples. However, according to Kadekodi, non-availability of complete toposheets and minimal topographic information make the estimation exercise difficult and erroneous. Scientists and scholars have noted that bereft of tree cover and perennially deficit in moisture, Gujarat's lands are extremely prone to erosion by water and wind.

Besides the physical erosion of land, there is the erosion of institutions as well. Research in economic history of land management in India has brought out that at the time of Independence, the de facto administration of uncultivated public land lay with the village and/or community panchayats and the state administration hardly interfered. After Independence and the merger of princely states, the revenue departments in all states took over these common lands, relegating the panchayat and community management to the background. A degenerating effect of the shift in management and regulation was that most of the land became open access, further contributing to serious degradation of the uncultivated land. This generated a serious threat to the environment in general as also to privately owned and operated cultivated lands. Second, the open access status made management and regulation ineffective. Yet another important aspect is the dependence of the poor on CPR for their livelihood.

Some selected experiments by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have successfully demonstrated the regeneration of open access common lands by converting them into collective and limited access

land pools. With regulated entry and use of common pool resources, the soil health and land economics improved. The poor households have gained more out of such experiments. If panchayats are not effective institutions for the purpose, there must be a serious search for alternatives. The open access status may have to be changed to restricted access.

Yet another development in the changing use of common land deserves attention. The land that has been vested with village panchayats can be taken back by the government for larger public interest, if it deems fit. Such land may then be turned into non-agriculture (NA) and used for setting up industrial units. The Gujarat government has adopted this new policy to facilitate industrial development in the state. It has also relaxed the eight kilometres criterion for the sale and purchase of private agricultural land. In short, land use and land management in the last 50 years has undergone significant changes. A need was felt, therefore, to take an analytical overview about the size, status and use of uncultivated wastelands also known as common property land resources.

At the state level, land use statistics do not reflect any major decline in the size of wastelands. On the contrary, between 1961 and 1991, the total uncultivated area has marginally increased in Gujarat. I have argued elsewhere that this difference is more due to reclassification rather than actual change in land use. At the village level the picture is different. Land use changes have taken place but they are not recorded in a timely manner. The lag is significant. Also, that both due to delays in verifying and sanctioning changes in land use, there are discrepancies in the recorded versus actual use. Besides, official reasons

for delays in recording land use changes and the almost discontinued practice of *talatis* (*patwaris*) visiting fields, encroachment on public lands including forest is rampant. In fact, this one indicator is robust enough to show that the administration in the state has become ineffective in regulating the use of wastelands. The encroachment in forests is in a way surprising because the forest department has a good policing mechanism.

However, this issue needs to be dealt with separately. Encroachments in forest areas arise because some department members may have been instrumental in the legal and not so legal clear felling of trees on a massive scale. The proceeds from this have not gone to the poor tribals who depend on forests for their survival and livelihood. Devoid of any natural resource base support and legal ownership, tribals are left with no choice other than to cultivate the clear felled forest lands for food. The forest department is in the know of the encroachment and, as per their convenience, the forest officers fine tribal farmers. In 1996, the Government of Gujarat sought clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India for regular allotment of about 60,000 hectares of forest land to tribals for cultivation – lands that they had already been cultivating for more than 10 years. Encroachment in revenue lands is also widespread.

The types of encroachment and the encroachers are as follows: (a) Removal of soil from grazing and other public land (private farmers and potters) (b) Encroachment on grazing and other public land, including forest, for cultivation (farmers) (c) Encroachment for non-agricultural uses (individuals for resident and other purpose, cooperatives and private industry) (d) Encroachment of public land

adjacent to land allotted by the government, i.e., cultivating more area than allotted by the government (both by individuals who were allotted land and those who leased it from the actual allottees).

The extent of encroachment is large. Practically in every revenue village where common land is lying unused and has some potential for use, some part of it is encroached. Estimates given by different studies show that the average encroachment on revenue wastelands ranged between 10 to 50% in the villages studied all over Gujarat. Farmers with cultivable lands adjacent to the common lands also encroach. These encroachments are of small pieces and often involve large number of farmers. Influential persons from urban areas also encroach lands to privatise fodder grown on common land, using force to keep the villagers out of the land. Later, these lands are kept for open access till the next season. The encroachers, known as fodder contractors, enjoy the support of influential persons in power.

Section 61 of the Land Revenue Code provides for penalty to be imposed on encroachers. However, in actual implementation numerous problems are faced in removing these encroachments. One, the encroachments are often not reflected on record and since clear demarcation of land is not done, it is difficult to identify the encroachment and its extent. Two, encroachers form a very strong lobby and may even be anti-social and/or closely associated with elected political representatives. There is, therefore, a lot of pressure against removal of encroachments, often by local leaders. In some cases, the sarpanch and other local leaders themselves are involved in the encroachments and have a vested interest in its continuing. At times, they are under pressure from

the taluka panchayat/district panchayat members and non-officials, who may have a stake in the encroachments

Under the legal provisions, removal of encroachment is the primary responsibility of the village panchayat. If the village panchayat fails, the taluka panchayat directs the village panchayat to carry out the removal of encroachment. However, if the village panchayat still fails to carry out the order, the taluka panchayat can supersede the gram panchayat. For reasons well known these steps are rarely taken.

Before closing the discussion on encroachment, we describe one more type of encroachment that leads to regeneration of soil and improvement of land productivity. The phenomenon was observed in parts of Saurashtra. Since cultivable land is limited, the extension in cultivation is attempted by illegal occupation of the wastelands that are located at a distance. The encroached wastelands are systematically reclaimed by adding silt from the tank bed or bed of the river. Such a process obtains in villages where the farmers are enterprising and have non-agricultural income to mobilise capital needed for investment in land.

Despite many problems, there has been an effort to regenerate wastelands in Gujarat. The experience, however, is mixed. The National Wasteland Development Board and the Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development have assisted some significant efforts in the state. Few selected experiments by the NGOs in the watershed programme have demonstrated success in removal of encroachment through people's institutions and regeneration of wastelands. The 'open access' has turned into 'regulated access'. The regeneration of wastelands has taken place

with twin objectives, one of revitalising natural resources, and second of creating income earning opportunities for the landless and poor. The regulated entry and use has improved the soil health and land economy. A few tree growers' cooperatives have also done well. But NGOs have also failed in removing encroachments and in popularising cooperatives for tree growing.

There is a prima facie case for utilising whatever wastelands that can be accessed and are not under cultivation or any other specific use. However, before any larger scale effort is initiated, some basic issues need attention.

The foremost need is for a sound and reliable database that can be easily updated. Hence, village level land use data needs to be computerised. It is also necessary to examine and review the collection and collation of data. At present there is no way to access inter-category transfer of land in the current land use data collection. The data collection through the remote sensing technology may also be used to analyse land use in different parts of Gujarat.

Property rights for different user groups needs to be defined and established. Dry regions within Gujarat have experienced serious conflicts between the cattle herders – maldharis – and the farmers. It is known that maldharis are the worst sufferers in the absence of common grazing lands and pastures. Wherever maldharis are settled in substantial numbers, since their survival depends mainly on livestock, the government should allot them common grazing land and facilitate its development. Gujarat would otherwise lose good livestock breeds and expert breeders. From the point of view of livelihood of maldharis and biological faunal diversity, this point

deserves serious attention. By helping maldharis in re-establishing common grazing and pasture lands under a clearly defined property regime, violent and bloody conflicts between them and the farmers may be avoided.

Gram panchayats should have better control over village wastelands. The regulation of wastelands should vest with the village panchayat. The panchayat should be claimants whereby they develop a stake in the management. Unless property rights are defined clearly, panchayats and village residents would not find it an attractive proposition to protect, regenerate and improve the productivity of wastelands.

The watershed programme being implemented in the state provides good opportunity for regeneration of wastelands in the state. The rural development and the revenue departments should coordinate and design projects that lead to successful regeneration of the CPRs, with the NGOs acting as facilitating organisations. If the district and lower level administration is able to ensure inclusion and successful treatment of the wastelands in villages, the revenue department can follow it up with its scheme for development.

In the context of limited availability of useful wastelands in Gujarat, its development will not be a panacea for the poor in the state. But regeneration of wastelands will in a big way improve the productivity of privately owned cultivated lands, which will generate more sustainable employment in agriculture. Good agriculture in turn will support agro-processing activities and production of other goods and services. Unless there is a substantial occupational diversification in rural areas away from agriculture, rural prosperity will remain a distant dream.

On sight – and insight

MOHAN KANDA

*Omkara Parivratham Vishvam
Sankalpa Parimutham Drishyam*

(Much as the universe is circumscribed by the 'Omkara', the panorama of vision is defined by what one is determined to view)

FEW areas in the realm of public administration in our country suffer as acutely with built-in infirmities as does the field of monitoring, whether of programmes or of other administrative tasks. The gap between field-reality and the systemic-perception is unacceptably wide and is assuming frightening dimensions.

This is more so in agencies which deal with sensitive issues such as the persisting maladies of poverty and backwardness and the provision of basic minimum needs to the excluded sections of the population, or increasing the production and enhancing the productivity of primary commodities.

When scarce resources are being applied to the resolution of issues critical to the nation's well-being, the efficacy of monitoring the impact of the chosen interventions should be of concern. Yet, the mechanisms in place are pathetic, so much so that it is not

funny any more to pretend that anything *else* requires greater or more immediate attention.

Our systems are dilapidated, primitive and incompetent, and have reduced us to an existence characterized by not mere ignorance but, often, as experience bordering on delusion¹. It is thus that we remain confined to a reactive mindset. Effectively disconnected with the dynamics of reality, we blunder along – living in a world of confusion – jumpy, nervous and forever resigned to responding in a knee-jerk fashion to endless crises largely the creation of our own ignorance.

How much longer can we live with the inability to decide whether we need to import food grains or export them, or whether a particular disease is, in fact, stalking the streets of the Capital or not¹? If, in one season, it is the onion-farmer to whose aid we are forced to rush *ad hoc* help in the wake of an unprecedented glut in the commodity with crashing prices, it is the onion-consumer, in the very next season, who is complaining as prices skyrocket following an acute shortage. One month, administrators of a large metropolis are biting their nails off wondering where the potato production has disappeared and hoping for supplies to arrive before unrest peaks,

* Views expressed in the article are those of the author and do not reflect in any manner the views of the Department in which the author is currently posted or has previously worked with.

weeks later farmers are dumping potato in neighbours' fields as the transport cost to the *mandi* is not worth the asking price!

Should not the headless chicken syndrome be replaced by a sensible system that is reasonably *au fait* with its environment and somewhat alive to the shape of things to come?

The task itself is not all that difficult to describe, at least in terms of definitional aspects, if not performance. One clearly needs to know why one wants to monitor a given phenomenon. In other words, one has in the first instance to decide on the description of the desired output. One has then to identify what one wants to monitor, how one will go about doing it, and through which means.

Let me explain. What does a doctor monitor in a sick patient? Certainly the pulse, temperature and blood pressure, and perhaps other aspects depending on the nature of the malady, the patient's age and so forth. For the pulse he uses his own fingers and a watch, for pressure the stethoscope, and for temperature the thermometer. And then there may be a nurse who actually performs the task of measurement.

Imagine the nurse replying, 'I don't know,' when asked for information by the doctor on any of the parameters. Or, worse, the nurse and the instrument combining to furnish incorrect figures. If perchance the patient was a reasonably literate person, and this transpired in his presence, what would he feel? Precisely what I, as a discerning consumer of information, feel in today's system whenever the need arises for information, as a back up mechanism for the process of selective decision-making in the face of alternative choices.

Another connected issue is that most of the information generated

in public systems is compliance-driven. There are questions to be answered in Parliament or cases to be defended in courts or explanations to be furnished to audit, and so on. That the information collected for the purpose of discharging these obligations often masquerades as a management information system, is an eloquent commentary of its quality. This is not to suggest that the august bodies referred to are being served with poor quality information. It is just that there is a world of difference between the manner of collection, the degree of analysis and the all-important value addition that characterizes a management system and sets it apart from a system that is largely informed by the need to organize an effective defence when called upon to justify its output.

Suffocated by compulsions of short-term accountability, expertise hides behind the skirts of expediency and we have the system spasmodically spewing out a featureless cocktail – a classical example of excellent raw-material and first-rate processing equipment producing a deliberately insipid product.

Errors of less than half-a-percentage point in assessing whether food-grains should be imported or not, even as a measure of abundant caution, can be called into question and result in endless inquisition. It will probably be some time before the taking of risks, and not their avoidance, will be recognised as the management function and the information system to support it designed.

Consequently, the system has deteriorated into a perennial state of reactive responses to situations which are otherwise eminently suited to scientific anticipation – events whose onset is predictable through a set of early warning systems that are easy to institute. Clearly the consumption require-

ments of a managerial origin now need to occupy centre-stage rather than the dictates of an approach driven entirely by considerations of compliance.

There are many issues which need to be addressed. One is information technology or management? It is typical, of our times and our systems, that everyone is obsessed with information technology but hardly any emphasis is laid on the management of information. There is little effort at establishing a continuous and meaningful dialogue with the external environment. Internalized systems are consequently out of 'sync' with signals emerging from events at the cutting edge level. Spatial, temporal and phase differences set in, causing a total lack of compatibility between what is and what it is perceived to be.

a) Just because data is available, it does not follow that its collection will lead to any specific benefit. Similarly, the mere absence of readily available data from familiar sources and at convenient intervals, does not preclude the possibility of rearranging the retrieval mechanism in such a manner, in space and time, as to facilitate acquisition of information that usually lies hidden from the 'naked eye' of conventional systems of observation.

b) Mere collection of data, from stereotyped locations and at conventional points of time cannot, in short, help organise a Management Information System (MIS). Working with an MIS is like looking for sea-shells in sand or polishing mined coal to obtain diamonds.

c) Sir Edmond Hillary was on a mission of adventure, which is probably why he could afford to say, 'Because it is there', when asked why he climbed Mount Everest. Managers of an information system, not being sportsmen or adventurers, need to have more specific motivation.

d) Unless we address these weaknesses with determination and a sense of urgency, the managerial regimes of our public system will remain forever out of touch with reality, robbed of the ability to organise pro-active and robust reactions, constantly involved in fire-fighting rather than enjoying harmonious and smooth relationship with the progress of initiatives at the grassroots level

Calendar orientation Suppose we want to know how many houses are being constructed in a year and from time to time, the tempo of implementation of the programme with reference to a pre-set schedule

Clearly the construction of a house divides itself into four fairly simple stages – the foundation, raising the walls to the lintel level, laying the roof and executing the internal finishing touches. It is at these points, in the 'life-cycles' of the programme, that reports need to be acquired so that conclusions can be drawn, recording the pace of the task with reference to the programme drawn up initially

See what happens if, instead, the system prescribes a calendar-interval output like, for instance, a monthly report. If, in a given case, the foundation was, in fact, completed by the fourth of a month, and the report was due on the second of the same month, one would get a report of an incomplete task for a whole month, although it was indeed performed within a couple of days after the previous report was due. Similarly, if the end of the year is defined in a routine manner, as say, 31 March and hypothetically, all houses had the last phase of completion performed on 1 April of the same year, clearly the monitoring system would come up with a report that not a single house had been completed in that year—a feeling does not quite convey the flavour of the actual situation

Take a statement like, 'There was normal rainfall during this week in the state of Andhra Pradesh.' Let us say it is made in the last week of July of a year. Anyone reasonably acquainted with the climatic realities of that region will tell us that if the said rain fell in, say Anantpur district, it would in all likelihood have saved the groundnut crop from perishing from acute moisture stress. If, on the other hand, the same rainfall occurred in Prakasham district, it is highly likely that the standing cotton crop there would have suffered irreparable damage.

Clearly, therefore, rainfall is not good, but geography makes it so! Even that, because we were given the time of the year. You can just imagine the total loss of value if the same statement were to apply to a whole year! We have also seen that in the absence of knowledge as to the crop that is standing in a given area at a given point of time, the information relating to rainfall has little intrinsic significance.

People entrusted with monitoring the condition and, therefore, the prospects of wheat, rice, cotton, onion or potato crops should be looking at the crop with reference to its own known 'life-cycle' (established technologies of crop modelling are available for this purpose) and with reference to the behaviour of the many related parameters such as the availability of seed, fertilizer and credit, the impact, on the health of the crop, of the incidence of pests and diseases, and, of course, the pattern of rainfall and so on. Looking at the rainfall in isolation clearly serves no purpose.

Like when it rained in November 1997. Wheat being an important crop and the heavy and somewhat untimely rains having occurred mostly in the wheat belt, there was a good deal of concern in a central ministry. Was

this rain good or bad? At that time there was a plea urging for a one-time-catch-up exercise within the system to come abreast with happenings in the world without, especially in the wake of internal liberalization of the economy and external globalization of markets. There were, as well, the new and unfamiliar obligations arising out of the set of obligations the country is committed to in the World Trade Organization.

The perestroika aficionados suggested the institution of an on-line, real time early warning system to track the prospects of selected crops and the seasonal conditions in general through a managerial approach to information and by outsourcing the requisite expertise and men/material back up. Not many of the mandarins concerned were unduly keen on this exotic *modus operandi* and the protagonists of change were running out of effective methods of sensitizing those at the top. The rains, literally, were a god send to this group.

Assessment The first step, of course, was to expose the weaknesses of the extant dispensation. The bosses were asked to summon the technical advisors and ask for a *sitrep*. All hell broke loose. The reach-for-the-phone bug went berserk. And the assessments started taking shape. Good. Can't say. Disastrous. If you showed me the version, I would have pointed you the man touting it. And not even one of the views was based on a knowledge of the life-cycle of the wheat crop or the way it would manifest itself when transposed on to the geo-climatic situation of the region, or the timing of the rain and its intensity!

Nor did any of the opinions offer themselves in value-added presentations, such as, what the implications would be to the crops/seed/credit/plant protection areas or to agencies

dealing with fertilizer or food distribution or, for that matter, the farmers! All analysis studiously ignored the rigours of a scientific approach. Every assessment without exception was based entirely on the aggregation of reports collected from spatial units and temporal divisions.

If all that was wrong with the 'reports' was that they were based on hearsay (collected with touching faith from equally uninformed sources committed to an exasperatingly similar approach), it would not have been too bad. The worst part of it was that no one agreed with another, or with themselves at different times!

That was also the year a major wheat state generated absurdly inconsistent forecasts, faithfully reproduced by the central system.

And in January/February of the succeeding year the system was caught unawares by a wholly predictable but totally unexpected demand for fertiliser from farmers who had cultivated wheat in areas normally kept fallow and covered by the November rains. The masters took their gloves off and authorised new initiatives in monitoring.

That the numbers were so infuriatingly erratic was irritating enough. What really got the goat of the masters was that each seemingly indefensible output was mechanically put forth, by the helpless mechanism, without so much as even a remotely plausible technical explanation, leaving one wondering whether there was any professional input at all in the whole process. The simple point was, there was none!

I have little quarrel, either with the actors in the whole episode or with the acrimony one generated by identifying with the reformist school, as, between the two phenomena, the institutions in question, much in the

fashion of the legendary lemming, had pressed the self-destruct button.

Asymmetric information flow. To come back to the point, it is clearly essential that the monitoring system 'dock' with what I would call the 'event horizon'. In other words, one has to be clear about what is to be observed, where, when, and by whom. Any system that generates featureless information flows unrelated to the pattern and quality of the demand is clearly in danger of deteriorating into 'noise' or worse still, 'static'.

And that, unfortunately, is another feature of the extant systems. One often gets the feeling of standing in no man's land, with deafening silence on the one side and ear splitting noise on the other. Decipherable signals, within decibel levels that correlate with the range within which our senses are receptive, are generally speaking, difficult to come by. Hence the pitiable status of our monitoring systems which, when called upon to aid critical decision-making, provide what best can be described as 'a synthesis of gut feelings', not even a 'ball-park' number or what astronomers (given the dimension of speculation in their field) would call a 'guestimate'.

There are many major issues one has to contend with in this regard. The first is the problem of asymmetry. It has been known that the phenomenon of 'self-addressal' generates fallacious situations in the realm of logic. A famous example is that of Plato stating, 'What Aristotle is about to say is false' and Aristotle's response, 'Plato is right'. Both cannot be correct statements!

There is the other well-known example of 'video feedback', the phenomenon caused by a video camera (normally meant to capture the image of an object and display it on a moni-

tor) being pointed at the monitor causing the camera to go berserk and generate chaotic output.

Most of our monitoring is undertaken by the agency charged with the implementation of the programme. I rest my case! The stage is set for the generation of the asymmetric information flows.

Event constitution. The system in place, which is a function of geography and calendar slices is totally unrelated to the rhythm of the lifecycle of events, whether it is a cotton crop or a house under construction. It is a settled precept of management systems that the original building block of the MIS structure should be the event constituting the destination of the initiatives underway. Each individual transaction on every card of a credit card company or the status, at a given point of time, of an aircraft in an airline are good illustrations. No other source of original information either in terms of space or time can aid the MIS in place. Information compiled hierarchically or in aggregates of events completely loses value in terms of assisting a decision support mechanism.

Even the most *desi* businessman often institutes and manages at least two systems of information-acquisition and analysis—one for discharging his obligations towards the regulatory mechanisms to which he is answerable and other to stay tuned to the dynamics of his operations with a view to maximizing the efficiency of the system.

Hence time has come to invert the syndrome so that the stage is set for the creation of an environment that will help put in place backup mechanism that will enable and undertake imaginative and location specific designs of interventions, generate 'real time' and on 'on line' observation

perspectives' and in-depth evaluation directly applicable to consumption requirements and likely to lead to re-engineering of the programme architecture. It is not enough even to acquire the ability merely to study the output efficiently. The method should be able to 'provoke' the generation of a response from the system to a given stimulus

Before we can do all this, however, there are other things to be done. Some of them are

- * To establish a network of observation points in a 'best-actor' mode

- * To define clearly what is the desired output—the data, primary or otherwise, that will be the 'building blocks', so that instead of sifting through a down-pour of noise looking for what is of value to the proposed analysis, we can straightaway work at the desired raw material

- * *Prepare the theatre* for the task of observation — much as a surgeon would prepare the patient, the operation theatre, and himself, before commencing a procedure

Or, as all of us do, before watching a programme on TV—switch on the set, tune into the desired channel, adjust the controls, dim the lights, wear our spectacles or sit at the right distance from the picture

- * *Frame synchronisation* — organisation of 'sync', between the rhythm of the 'life-cycle' of the event being observed and the spatial, temporal and activity-related signal-acquisition matrix

- * Installation of a *cognitive system* — that mechanically recognizes and diverts different parts of the incoming traffic into separate 'lanes' in accordance with a pre-set logic so that the architecture of the superstructure is undertaken automatically

- * Introduce a value addition function that will, thereafter, perform the task

of converting the stored raw data into capsules in a consumable form

- * Install a *Management By Exception* (MBE) regime, to establish a selective access protocol, that will throw up reports only in a 'by exception' mode previously defined. The mere fact of receipt of a message will indicate that there is some significant observation to be looked at. This must include a built-in facility that facilitates 'graded-response' so that different modes of cognition are associated with the receipt of information pertaining to the occurrence of events of varying significance to the system

Observation of rare celestial spectacles requires careful preparation and skilful application of the state-of-the-art techniques, mere gazing at the sky expectantly will not quite do the trick. The monitoring of programmes is no different

Managing land resources. Let us now turn to the status of the efforts on at managing the country's land resources and the issues that arise in monitoring this effort. We note, briefly that there have been some noteworthy developments in recent times. The first is the constitution of the Department of Land Resources (DoLR) in the Government of India essentially through strengthening the erstwhile Department of Wasteland Development which, in turn was an offshoot of the original National Wastelands Development Project in the Ministry of Environment and Forests

All land related programmes concerning drought prone areas and deserts (in addition to the original Integrated Wastelands Development Programme) and land reforms such as institutional issues including ceilings on surplus land, etc., and the updating and the computerization of land records, strengthening of the state

revenue administrations have been brought under a single umbrella.

Thanks largely to the unrelenting endeavours of the Soil Conservation Society of India and the strong sentiments expressed by the Mohan Dharia Committee on Wastelands Development, exclusive administrative and political space has for the first time been created in the central government for the all important subject of land

We also make another quick note of some interesting aspects of the ambience in which this nascent workstation is taking off. First, 'land' is a state subject under Schedule VII of the Constitution of India. But so are agriculture, primary education and irrigation — all areas of public concern and large-scale central interventions supported by massive funding

What is happening is that a mere 50 years down the road after Independence, it would neither be politically pragmatic nor economically feasible for the allocational priorities of states to be entirely resonant to major concerns of the national developmental agenda. Also, a weakness for populist measures is an understandable drawback of state-level approaches, especially in the multi-party dispensation that is rapidly gaining ground as a major feature of the country's polity. Therefore, central initiatives in these areas are not only accepted but actually welcomed, if not demanded, by the states

That 'wastelands' mindset continued to influence the interventions of DoLR even after Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) were made over to it and all the programmes of DoLR, including the IWDP, adopted the integrated watershed approach as long ago as 1995. In other words, the management of the

country's land resource, as such, was not being perceived as the mandate of DoLR even as recently as a year ago

Let us first note the enormity and the complexity of the task of keeping track of what is going on. At the time of writing there were estimated to be as many as 12000 watershed projects under implementation, spread over as many as 400 districts of the 27 states and 5 union territories of the country, and flowing out of the three major programmes of DoLR, namely IWDP, DPAP and DDP.

Monies are usually released to the respective DRDAs, in bulk either for all the projects sanctioned by DoLR (as is the case for IWDP), or for those expected to be sanctioned individually by the DRDA concerned. The releases are made in seven tranches, the first with the sanction, and the second after certain entry-point activities are satisfactorily concluded, such as the identification of the project implementation agency (PIA), constitution of the watershed team, formation of the watershed association and election of the watershed committee etc. The first of the remaining instalments is released after 50% of the funds earlier released have been utilised, and the remaining thereafter, in accordance with a pre-set schedule.

Many activities comprise the actual programme, including the construction of structures such as check dams or percolation tanks, the harvesting and optimum utilisation of water, and the conservation of soil, which are primary objectives, followed by appropriate on or off-farm activities. Quality aspects include the degree and nature of peoples' participation, arrangements for ensuring sustainable management of the assets created, providing for equity in the access to the benefits of the investments made, and so on.

Given the massive funds flowing into the exercise (around 900 crore in the financial year 2000-2001), the geographical spread of interventions, the number of activities and the fact that the approach is regarded as a most favoured instrument – for addressing poverty and backwardness on the one hand, and concerning increased production and enhanced productivity of marginal lands on the other – monitoring the pace and quality of the projects as well as their impact, is indeed a daunting task.

The arrangements in place for tracking the dynamics of the implementation of the programme, even at the cutting-edge level, viz., the DRDA, are no different from those that have been described earlier as favoured by the usual departmental systems and, therefore, generate little by way of helpful information.

With the first round of watershed based programmes having completed their life-cycles in the year 2000, great interest was evinced in ascertaining the efficacy of the approach. Measures are called for which might improve the capacity of the institutions to keep abreast of ground-truths.

It was around this time that another major shift in paradigm also manifested itself in the outlook of DoLR, adopting the concept of *management*, rather than the mere *use* of the land resources as the focus of attention. Management was defined as a combination of *dynamic* conservation, *sustainable* development and ensuring *equity in the access* to the benefits of public intervention.

An effort began, to capture an image of the entire land mass of the country, attempt a multi-dimensional classification dividing it into A, B, and C categories requiring regionally differentiated approaches that factor in, among others, considerations relating

to the varying lead-activities in different agro-ecological zones.

B-2-V Matrix The first step, of course was to eliminate what needed no monitoring. The western portions of the Rann of Kutch and the Thar desert, and the northern parts of the Himalayan cold-wastes, are also part of the land resources of the country. No specific or immediate treatment of these is, however, within DoLR's mandate. The other portions of these deserts, however, may need to be looked at, although in a manner different from the rest of the country.

In the rest of the country and at the other end of the spectrum, there are those areas where one round of development has taken place and second generation issues have surfaced, such as soil fatigue and water-logging. While dealing with those lands the approach will obviously have to be one of addressing issues relating to the sustainability of the cropping patterns and the application of state-of-the-art technologies of soil and water management (the emphasis on conservation of resources being relatively less).

It is, then, in the remaining part of the country (the 'B' category) that the classical watershed approach, emphasizing the virtues of natural resource management through people-centred designs and supported by provision of inputs and arrange availability of back-up mechanisms in the shape of linkages (credit, extension, marketing, etc.), will assume a predominant role.

¹ The 'B' category can again be subdivided into categories 1, 2 and 3 with reference to the levels of awareness of the user-communities, availability of inputs, existence of backward and forward linkages and the presence of institutional support (panchayati raj institutions, non-government organi-

sations, academic and research bodies, etc.)

* It will be in the 'B 2' category that, again, the watershed approach, in the conventional sense, would appear the prime candidate amongst the forms of intervention for addressing the problems of poverty, backwardness, production and productivities with a feel for natural resources management and in a participatory mode

* Many things can be done in a watershed – some vital and others either essential or only desirable. It will clearly help to choose a vital 'lead activity' (call it V) around which the design of the proposed intervention can be woven

So we have a B-2-V matrix for the watershed approach and the programmes therefrom, while other methods are being identified for action elsewhere. Yes! the theatre is being prepared!

Other steps being taken to sharpen the edges of the watershed landscape (how else does one obtain a high resolution image?), include initiatives to shift from the normative mode to project formulation, introduce the concept of keeping a project on 'probation', use the plural PIA arrangement to combine the best features of NGOs and the line departments of the government, employ remote-sensing techniques to conduct a periodic *land census* and inventorize the land resources and install a back-ended *exit-protocol* that will focus on the sustainability and equity aspects of the projects

Having done all this, the situation is to Shift to a paradigm of 'partnership' with institutions at district/state level substantially enhancing the credibility and competence of agencies used, Use 'observers' instead of 'monitors'

'Partnership initiatives' will be undertaken at different levels of administrative hierarchy that deal with the implementation of programmes so that much like the food grocer that travels in a car in an outer circle as horses gallop in a race parallelly creating external export and independent 'observation' of events takes place generating the sort of information that can assist the task of management in the true sense

It is at this stage that, in a regionally differentiated 'best-actor' syndrome, *partnerships* will be struck, at the district level, with the most promising institution, from out of the existing ones such as line departments of the state governments, non-governmental organisations, farmers associations, research/academic institutions or *krishi vigyan kendras*, farmer's training centres, etc. The selected institution will then assist, in the process of the design of the watershed programme as well as in its monitoring, apart from undertaking supervision of the newly evolved 'exit protocol'

Similarly, in each state a centre of excellence will be identified from among institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institute of Management, the State Institutes of Rural Development, eminent academic/research institutions such as IRMA and NEERI, whose services will be enlisted to perform a similar role at the state-level, largely to coordinate the efforts of the district-level partners identified in that state

Simple formats will be designed through which communication will then take place essentially between the district-level partner and the District Rural Development Agency (the hub of all activities connected with the watershed programme). Reports will emerge in a pre-set format and at specified points of time having regard

to the rhythm of the life-cycle of the programme, resulting in the acquisition of signals recognised as crucial to effective monitoring

In conclusion this paper will have more than served its purpose if it leads to recognition of the criticality of the relationship between the 'observed' phenomenon and the 'observer'

Without going into intricacies of Einstein's Theory of Relativity or the snarls that arise when systems turn back upon themselves, we have seen that acts of observation, and, therefore, the discipline of monitoring are, contrary to common belief, substantially subjective tasks

In other words, it is necessary to 'prepare', much as a surgeon prepares himself and his assistants and the equipment as well as the patient, the entire 'information loop' or the 'theatre' comprising the observer, the observed and the tools employed for the purpose, for the process of observation or monitoring

After all, one must wear one's glasses, dim the lights in the room, switch on the TV, tune into the required channel and twiddle with the controls relating to the brightness, colour, contrast etc. before a desired programme can be satisfactorily watched

Not necessarily if as the only method, but even as the best among the available options, it suggests a different way of staying tuned to the rhythm of events stimulated by external interventions, that real-time and on-line engagement with happenings is possible

It shows the way to the choice of a 'decibel level' somewhere in between the ear-splitting noise and the deafening silence that appear to be the only options offered by the system in place so that the spectre of uncertainty will no longer stalk our decision-making apparatus

Books

PEOPLE, PARKS AND WILDLIFE: Towards Co-existence by Vasant Saberwal, Mahesh Rangarajan and Ashish Kothari Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2001

IN a recent panel discussion on BBC, the country's foremost conservationist and high-visibility wildlife crusader, Valmik Thapar held forth passionately on the need to constitute a separate federal ministry in charge of protecting India's wildlife, with enough money and guns to detract the most diabolical of designs on India's biological wealth. The book being reviewed, in striking contrast, acknowledges the crisis facing conservation in India but argues for exactly the opposite.

People, Parks and Wildlife deals with the issue of conservation in its historical, scientific, socio-economic and political dimensions. Indeed, the scope of the book's argument is civilizational – how do we, as a civilization, propose to conserve our natural heritage for posterity? The authors plead for a move away from conflicting dualities and clashing worldviews, towards a synthesis of political realities and scientific incertitude. They make an argument for letting the people in, opening the business of conservation to local communities, and dismantling the traditional monopolies of scientists and the exclusive urban conservation community.

Without dishing out philosophical jargon, the case for an alternative conservation paradigm is laid out, calling for an avoidance of dogmas and biases on which the prevailing paradigm is based. In a refreshing and innovative strategy, the three authors claim authorship of individual chapters while retaining joint ownership of the overall argument.

The current paradigm of conservation springs from the credence that all human activities are inimical to conservation, concluding logically in the ideal of 'wilderness', or nature sans humans. This ideal has resulted in the institutionalization of an exclusionary system in the form of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries from which all human presence is sought to be removed, if necessary by force. The book begins with Mahesh Rangarajan digging at the roots of the biases inherent in this exclusionary logic. Locating the debate

in the feudal and colonial origins of the ideology and practice of exclusion, the first few chapters trace the evolution of conservation awareness among the Indian elite through the last century and a half, culminating in the ecological dictatorship of Indira Gandhi in the '70s. In a riveting discussion on hunting, the specious construction of the sovereign as conservationist and the subaltern as the nihilist in the colonial period and its consolidation in the post-colonial period is laid bare.

In the next chapter, Vasant Saberwal takes on the science that is routinely paraded in justification of exclusion of humans from conservation areas. He explodes the myth of 'wilderness' and demonstrates the invalidity of the ideal, arguing that human agency has been instrumental in shaping landscapes that today might seem 'pristine'. Using examples from the Amazon, Africa, North America and the Himalaya and arguments from archaeology, ecology and conservation biology, the chapter outlines the historical role of fire, grazing and indigenous farming systems in shaping, altering, and maintaining the biological profiles of entire regions. Repudiating the notion that all human interaction with the natural world is necessarily destructive, Saberwal provides compelling evidence to the contrary, contending that some human use, under certain conditions, is actually beneficial to overall biological diversity.

Turning their attention to the politics of conservation in the next chapter, Vasant Saberwal and Ashish Kothari delineate the human costs of the practice of exclusion in India. The chapter presents evidence of the miseries brought upon rural population due to restrictions in national parks and sanctuaries and of the consequent loss of support for conservation agendas among local communities. The costs of such alienation, argue the authors, are being paid in terms of encroachment of development interests such as power projects and mining into protected areas and active collusion of local communities in poaching. Further that the hostility of local communities invariably results in political reticence in enforcing exclusion in all but the most high-profile protected areas.

Somewhere between the lines lies the argument that this haphazard implementation, while alienating

local communities, still fails in its objective of 'preservation'. The apparent contradiction, between the inability to implement exclusion in all but the most high-profile areas and the simultaneously rising human costs in all conservation areas, is never clearly resolved in the book. However, the state's response to growing criticism of the policy of exclusion and its inefficacy, in the form of the 'ecodevelopment project', though accepted by the authors in principle is severely criticized for the glaring aberrations in its practice, pronouncing it 'inadequate' to the task. A 'drastic reorientation' is what is called for.

The final chapter lays out the alternative paradigm. Building on the ecological premise that all human interaction is not bad for nature, and on the political wisdom that local communities would be the best allies in any conservation programme, the authors plead for setting up institutional structures at the local level that ensure tenurial security to resident peoples and provide for an effective flow of benefits from conservation, such as tourism revenues, to local communities.

Moving on to a higher level, the book proposes an expansion of the focus of conservation from protected areas to the level of the landscape. Arguing that the protected area network in India, comprising of less than 5% of the landmass, is grossly 'insufficient to support viable population of most large mammals, there is a need either to increase this network, a politically unlikely event, or to expand the current conservation focus beyond the existing network to include areas used by humans.' To this end, the appendix to the book lists several categories that could be added to the ones currently used, bringing a larger area under the conservation umbrella without the hitherto concomitant exclusion of humans.

The book appears to be a voice of sanity in the prevailing cacophony of claims and counterclaims, charges and countercharges. It also raises the debate beyond a discussion on the number of tigers left in the wild or the number of guns required to catch poachers. Most importantly, it brings the silent majority into the equation and assigns them a stellar role in the alternative scheme of things. This call for reason, it is important to emphasize, is sedate and erudite, eschewing an apportionment of blame or guilt. It is as welcome a development in the Great Indian Conservation Debate as it is unusual.

A few loose ends, nevertheless, remain. The authors insist that 'conservation practice is a profoundly political process' as it 'necessarily entails the imposi-

tion of regulations over access to certain resources, *with specific people or institutions* attempting to define who has access to which resources, and on what terms' (emphasis added). While the book puts a face on the people who are affected by this 'imposition of regulations' and also caricatures the divisions within the state that is not as effective in imposing those as our 'specific people and institutions' would want it to be, there is no attempt to explain who these 'specific people' are.

Several times in the course of the arguments, references are made to 'exclusionary conservationists', 'Indian Forest Service and most wildlife conservation groups', 'urban conservationists' and 'urban middle class and conservation community'. If this group is so powerful as to decide and direct the overall strategy of conservation then it needs a face. If the book is an attempt at dialogue with this group, this lack of clarity is a handicap. One gets the sneaking suspicion that this group is sinister and powerful from the defensive posture of the authors. Every few pages, the book asserts the authors' fear that the mainstream conservationists will interpret their arguments to mean unrestricted access to the protected areas leading to disaster. Every few pages, we (and presumably 'they') are assured that the converse is true, '*We are not arguing that any and all land usage is compatible with maintaining biological diversity*' (emphasis in original). The constant repetition of the disclaimer, possibly for the cynical, is puzzling in the light of the excellent arguments otherwise presented.

The book takes apart the central exclusionary logic of Indian conservation with great skill and fervour. However, in doing so, it focuses exclusively on only one aspect of conservation practice. The exclusionary logic also extends to debarring the presumably disinterested citizenry, both urban and rural, from a say in decisions. The tradition whereby the community of scientists and urban wildlife enthusiasts, the 'they' in the equation, has usurped the high moral ground vis-a-vis conservation wisdom needs to be challenged and rolled back. In addition to expanding the scope of conservation from a few protected areas to the entire landscape, the alternative paradigm should also aim at inculcating a conservation ethic in the citizens. If, as a democracy and as a civilization, we have to dwell on the best way of conserving our natural heritage, we need to be informed and educated in the nuances of the problematique first, hopefully as children. But, for starters, this book is an excellent first step.

Ashwini Chhatre

**THE OXFORD ANTHOLOGY OF INDIAN
WILDLIFE: Hunting and Shooting (volume I);
Watching and Conserving (volume II) edited by
Mahesh Rangarajan Oxford University Press, Delhi
1999**

THE jungles of India have for decades attracted hunters and naturalists alike, who have indulged in the sport of hunting and many who, over a period of time, have so grown to love the jungles and its denizens that they have turned avid conservationists. In the two volume Anthology of Indian Wildlife the editor, Mahesh Rangarajan, has attempted to present a brief history of India's wildlife by a careful selection of writings which spans over a century and half.

The Indian subcontinent is home to an amazing array of animals, birds, and plants in its forests, mountains, rivers and oceans. The number of plant species in India is estimated to be over 45,000 representing about 7% of the world's flora. The country's faunal wealth is equally diverse. With over 81,000 species it represents about 6.4% of the world's fauna. However, we are losing this biological wealth at an alarming rate. In the last century we have lost some key species and several unknowns have disappeared even before discovery. The last authentic record of the Cheetah in India is from 1948 when the Maharaja of Korwai (in Bastar, Chhatisgarh) shot three juvenile males for sport one night in the glare of the headlights of his car. It has been officially declared extinct since. The pink-headed duck which once inhabited the swampy grasslands and forests of east and north-east India was last seen in 1935 in Bihar.

India, with its abundant wildlife held fascination for all who ruled this country and hunting game was popular with princes, landowners and other gentry alike. Hunting was pursued by many because the Indian mystique lay hidden in the country's jungles. For others it was a source of entertainment. And for some a good pawn to be used in the game of diplomacy. The Nawab of Junagadh made the hunting of the lion an exclusive sport meant for only a 'chosen' few. Elephants were meant to be captured alive because they were used in warfare. This involved a totally different set of skills.

With the advent of the British Raj, hunting for sport gained more popularity. From the historical point of view, this era heralded the death toll for India's wildlife. The meaningless slaughter for the mere thrill of it leaves one aghast. An account of a duck shoot gives a grand total of 3511 birds being killed in one day! The

stone writings in the Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Bharatpur are mute testimony to this slaughter even today.

But there is more to this anthology than just hunting feats. The writings open a window to the vast and diverse Indian landscape, deliberately chosen to cover the wide expanse of the country. They also reflect what existed and what has been lost. The quality and even the type of habitat has changed or been altered over an expanse of time. G. C. Mundy in writing of the 1820s talks about a lion shoot in Haryana. He describes the area as, 'one vast sheet of wild jungle, abounding in game' – a scene hard to imagine in the present state of Haryana. Frank Simson describes how he hunted the two rhinoceros species in West Bengal. The Javan rhino that he shot in the Sunderbans now survives in only two places – a reserve in Vietnam and a national park in Indonesia. The larger Indian rhinoceros, though in a narrower range, is still found in eastern and north-eastern India.

In the days when travel was mainly by horseback, hunting meant journeying over a wide expanse of area over a long period of time. The anthology presents anecdotes, some thrilling and others disgustingly bloodthirsty, and by doing so, brings to the fore, the infinite knowledge and love these people had for the quarry and its surroundings. It is this love and intimate knowledge of wildlife that brought the realisation of how much had been lost and ultimately a change in attitude. A true sense of the loss is best captured by A. J. T. Johnsingh and G. S. Rawat who follow the route Jim Corbett took when trailing a particular man-eater in 1938. A sad account where the authors find that the glory of the land is all but lost in a span of 45 years.

The fall of the British Raj in India heralded a new era in the history of wildlife. However, some effects of the Raj still lingered and hunting was prevalent until the 1960s. In fact it probably accelerated with the newly found 'freedom' of the country. The advent of automobiles, long range rifles and other implements of 'modern civilisation' helped to further hasten the decline of India's wildlife. The turning point was the formation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972. There was now a law which dictated what could and could not be hunted. The law was also a landmark because it designated areas that were to be kept aside for the conservation of wildlife. Protected areas in the form of national parks and sanctuaries were designated under this Act. Attitudes were also gradually changing. Conservation was replacing slaughter. The excerpt from Jim Corbett's 'The Man-eating Leopard of

Rudraprayag' where he prefers to watch the beautiful Kashmir stag or Hangul, instead of shooting it, is an indicator of a change in attitude. The pursuit of the quarry remained the same, the thrill and excitement the same, but the end result was different. Instead of a trophy, people came back with detailed accounts of wildlife observed or spectacular photographs.

The conservation ethic brought to the fore the need for good research. R. Sukumar's meticulous documentation of the family life of wild elephants gives a flavour of the rigour and concentration required for good field research. The concept of 'nature' itself changed to incorporate smaller and less conspicuous species providing an interesting transition from wildlife to the concept of biodiversity.

Wildlife enthusiasts were beginning to write about animals other than just tigers and elephants. Zai Whitaker's description of the nesting of Olive Ridley turtles provides as much excitement as a tiger hunt. Wildlife conservation had by now become a hobby, a passion for some. Animal and bird watching replaced hunting. Bird watching was of course a hobby pursued even by the British who helped perpetuate this by maintaining meticulous documentation. One of the earliest documentation on the birds of Delhi was by a British officer, Major General Hutson and published in 1854. This kind of documentation brought focus on urban areas and encouraged people to appreciate faunal wealth in urban areas. Delhi perhaps has been more fortunate than other cities. Usha Ganguly published another book titled *A Guide to the Birds of Delhi Area* in 1954.

The editor's selection of writings, however, do not reflect the present scenario of Indian wildlife. Wildlife in India is at present in a crisis situation. The reasons for this are different than they were a century ago. The population of the country has grown manifold and with this, so also have the needs and aspirations of people. Along with this are the increasing commercial interests that perhaps pose the biggest threat that wildlife faces in the country.

Commercial monoculture plantations of eucalyptus, wattle, silver oak and teak for timber and pulpwood have severely fragmented the forests and affected animal populations like elephants. Exotics introduced for ornamental and other reasons have taken over, pushing away native species in many areas. The commercial demand for many animal products has encouraged poaching and led to the decline of the animal. Protected areas where wildlife has been relatively safe for the last 40 years or so are also falling prey to these pressures. So great is the demand from the commercial sector that

loopholes in the law are being sought to 'denotify' areas once considered sacrosanct for wildlife. The anthology fails to cover aspects of this crisis.

The bigger crisis is from the conflict between local communities and the authorities that are meant to protect wildlife. Local communities over the ages have got a raw deal. Several writings in the anthology indicate that the 'native shikaris' were considered reckless and the methods they employed in hunting cruel. It was ironic that these locals hunted for sheer existence while the aristocracy hunted for pleasure. Some of the authors have however acknowledged the locals for their skills and even used them. Corbett in one of his articles mentions the information system he had established through local people to get information about man-eaters. This was, however, not the universal opinion that was far more negative and neither has it changed over the years.

The general feeling towards the local communities is one of mistrust and suspicion. With the setting up of the Colonial Forest Department and the establishment of the Wildlife (Protection) Act in 1972, the local communities probably got the worst deal. Wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, established for the protection of wildlife, limited the local communities' access to these areas that were their mainstay for fodder, fuelwood, food and medicines. Local people have been seen as intruders, poachers and destroyers of wildlife and biodiversity.

They have never been taken as partners in conservation. As the conflict heightens, alternatives involving communities in the management of natural resources are being tried. Several contemporary writings on this aspect are available and could have been introduced.

Another aspect of wildlife conservation in India, overlooked in this anthology, is the intricate relationship many communities have shared with wildlife over centuries. India has an equally rich cultural heritage with over 461 tribes, making it a country with the largest indigenous population. These tribes have been intricately linked to the biological wealth of the country mainly because they depend almost entirely on natural resources for their survival. Wildlife in India has deep cultural and religious significance. Communities in different parts of the country still protect wildlife species for their religious and cultural significance. Much has been written about the Bishnois in Rajasthan and their efforts in protecting the blackbuck. A sample of such writing would have added to the richness to this anthology.

In the final analysis it appears that Volume II of the anthology could perhaps have covered a lot more ground and sought more authors for a better understanding of contemporary wildlife issues. The concluding piece in Volume II suggests a focus on urban wildlife. A lot of interesting writing on this exists. Ranjit Lal for example, has written extensively about wildlife in the Delhi Ridge (a unique city forest). His writings have been a source of inspiration for many Delhi birdwatchers. Perhaps the editor was constrained by the fact that there is not so much published material available. One is not sure if this accounts for six pieces out of thirty by M. Krishnan! There are many such as Anwaruddin Chaudhary, D. K. Lahiri Chaudhary and Madhav Gadgil who could have contributed to contemporary wildlife issues. There is also a lot of available writing by relatively unknown authors that may have been accessed, particularly if the possibility of accepting unpublished material existed. Wildlife writing today has become compartmentalised into various factions such as research, popular readings, and people-oriented issues. There is clearly a need to put all these together in a systematic manner. A third volume of the anthology that focuses on contemporary wildlife issues could be thought of.

For someone who grew up in a transition world where hunters gave way to trained wildlife biologists, the inspiration to become a conservation specialist came from stories of yore written by naturalists like Jim Corbett and Salim Ali. This was a time when like-minded people nurtured and groomed the younger generation with similar interests. They made a special effort to take interested youngsters bird watching and relate stories from the wild. For most of us interested in the subject, people such as these, and books, were the sole source of inspiration. In the 21st century, where dreams are lived through 'virtual reality' and television, and even books are written in 'bytes', the two volume anthology comes as a breath of fresh air.

Seema Bhatt

LAND, POWER AND MARKET by Jacques Pouchpadass
Sage Publications, Delhi, 2000

Jacques Pouchpadass (JP henceforth), research professor at the Centre Nationale des Recherches Scientifique in Paris, is currently engaged in monitoring French researches in India. His tryst with India began in 1974 when he wrote his doctoral dissertation on the 1917-18 peasant movements in Champaran.

Recently, he has published two books in English, *Champaran and Gandhi* (based on his dissertation) and *Land, Power and Market* (under review) – the latter an exercise in the political economy of Champaran through the analysis of the effect of market penetration into Champaran's structured peasant society and on its power relationship during the colonial period.

In his introduction Pouchpadass has raised the question of the method of studying a structured peasant society based on institutions of caste and religious ideas, now interacting with institutions fashioned out of western liberalism and individualism. Towards this end he has placed his trust in the Annales school of historical anthropology, as the framework includes the totality of human experience, including the mentalities and worldview.

In most societies, he argues, it is not possible to dissociate economic relationships from social and power relationships. The Brahmin tenants of Champaran, for example, received concessional treatment in rent fixation as compared to other castes. Then there is the semantic gap in the discourses of colonial records and the local relationships. The peasants do not keep records. The colonialists treat peasants primarily as tax/revenue payers and write about them and their condition, which is recorded. In such a situation, the historian is faced with the task of getting into the mentalities of those record-keepers. The Annales school, JP claims, helps him to do this. He has, however, also drawn liberally from the analytical concepts of Polanyi and Dumont, both of whom in turn drew from Marx and Weber.

Through an excellent marshalling of archival materials, he has shown that in the initial decades of the 20th century the crop production of Champaran declined. But neither were any new investments nor technological innovations forthcoming (Ch. 1 to 6), since the peasants were unwilling to take any initiative. The effort by the colonial state to introduce perennial canal irrigation was partial and pitifully inadequate. One is reminded here of the stories about the dominant farmers of 17th and 18th century Europe who were induced towards technological innovation in their farm land by market expansion, increasing industrial and urban development, and by successfully restraining feudal control.

None of this happened in Champaran though, as is well recorded in this book. Under such a situation the food crop market that developed in Champaran benefited mainly the dominant landholders while the subalterns suffered. Further, the rich had other sources

of income from rent, credit, and so on. The income from crop selling constituted a small percentage of their total income, which made them all the more indifferent to efficient agricultural production. The external non-food crop market, comprising of indigo and opium, was controlled by colonialist planters, patronised by the state and earned enormous profits which was siphoned out of the region.

Development of the land as well as the credit and labour market – all interlinked – that took place was deeply influenced by the political and social power relations as well as caste and religious relations (Ch 7 to 13). The colonialists undertook some initial reform work for these infrastructure developments, but hesitatingly and by compromising with local customs and power structures, thereby introducing immense complexities and interrelated layers of power relations into the system. All these certainly affected the markets in Champaran as elsewhere, benefiting the rural gentry. In the concluding chapter, JP adduces that this gentry included a large percentage of backward castes who were more conscious about their caste and less concerned about their role as patrons for the poorer labouring classes unlike their upper caste landholding brethren. This possibly explains the current bitter caste divide in Bihar.

The bibliography is a researcher's delight, more so since it contains many references to literary sources. These sources, however, have not been accorded centre-stage in his analysis. One is reminded in this respect of the achievements of subaltern historiography (without joining their ranks) in using such sources for unravelling the mysteries of peasant mentalities. This small disappointment, however, does not take away the enormous contribution of this work in the historiography of colonial India, still relatively under-researched compared to the ancient and modern periods.

Hrinmay Dhar

THE UNORGANIZED SECTOR: Work Security and Social Protection edited by Renana Jhabvala and R K A Subrahmanya. Sage Publications, Delhi, 2000

THE concerns that led to the writing of this book are spelt out in a forceful preface by Ela Bhatt, the founder of SEWA. Social protection is not available to the poor. The reason for linking work and social protection lies in the observation that 'poor women all work for them

the security of work is synonymous with security of life'. Moreover, that the situation has worsened with liberalization, so that the growth process is not generating answers to the security needs of the poor.

The concept of 'social security' is one that originated in the West and in the context of economies in which 'the core of income and welfare is assured through regular participation in work and production, leaving only specific contingencies which need to be tackled through public policy' (Rodgers 1999: 1). In developing countries, however, few persons are fortunate enough to have regular and reasonable earnings. The weak link between social security and economic growth is due to structural factors such as uneven distribution of assets, income and employment (Prabhu and Iyer 1999). In exploring questions relating to social security, we rapidly come up against fundamental questions on the nature of society. Mihir Bhatt, in a chapter on 'Integrating disaster mitigation and social security' suggests that 'disasters or conflicts are opportunities for social transformation through the victim's social security'.

In the wake of the Gujarat earthquake, with its unprecedented toll in loss of life and livelihood, these are particularly pertinent questions, to recognize the vulnerability of a large proportion of our people even in normal times is itself sobering. Conceptually, there are several terms used when talking of social security: social protection, social insurance, social safety nets, social assistance, to name a few. Social insurance generally refers to systems in which workers make contributions, social assistance and safety nets are likely to be non-contributory (Lund and Srinivas 2000). Different plans and programmes for providing security have different mechanisms of financing and of giving entitlement.

The perspective through which this book has been written is to record experience and experiments in social security, not theorize about it. The existing policy framework, strategies and emerging trends are discussed in the first few chapters by Renana Jhabvala and/or R K A Subrahmanya. These narrations lead to a number of issues that need to be the subject of public debate. First, the traditional notions of liability and responsibility are difficult to transfer to workers in the unorganized sector, which is 90% of all workers. Among other reasons, there is generally no clear 'employer' in this sector. Does this absolve the 'employer class' of responsibility? Should their contributions be taken through general taxation? Should the liability be sectoral, using the mechanism of cess collection on an

industry's products—as in the case of the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund? Should entitlements be linked to work, or to vulnerability?

The book reviews in simple and clear language a number of different experiments that have been initiated all over the country, including the welfare funds which are discussed in an interesting chapter by R K A Subrahmanya who cautions that in the Indian context, tax based schemes may be better than contributory ones. If these funds are developed sector by sector, the result is heavy overheads, some way of integrating schemes needs to be developed.

Health insurance schemes have been developed for the poor unorganized sector. The SEWA experience is described by Mira Chatterjee and Jayshree Vyas, and the Sewagram experience by U N Jajoo. The financial aspect of security is only part of the picture. The other part is the actual availability of health/schooling/care infrastructure. The SEWA (Rural Team) have been able to tackle this problem by giving local recruits short, intensive training. They observe, 'This policy was found to be far more effective than recruiting city bred technicians'.

Mina Swaminathan argues that there should be a comprehensive 'maternity and child care policy'. Presumably, however, different women have different needs, and the actual operationalization of such a policy would take different forms in different places. One attempt to provide child care to construction workers is profiled in the chapter by Brinda Singh on Mobile Creches.

Other groups in need of attention include widows. As Marty Chen points out, widows are often young women whose needs may be better met through access to jobs and child care than through widow pensions. Moreover, as she says, 'Both the fact that so many widows have to manage on their own and the fact that the maintenance of widows who live as dependants with others is conditional on their perceived contribu-

References

Gerry Rodgers 'Poverty Exclusion and Insecurity: Issues and Policy Frameworks'. Paper presented at the seminar on Social Security in India, organized by Institute for Human Development and the Indian Society of Labour Economics, New Delhi, 15-17 April, 1999. Draft.

K. Seetha Prabhu and Sandhya V. Iyer 'Financing Social Security in India: A Human Development Perspective'. Paper presented at seminar on Social Security in India, organized by Institute for Human Development and the Indian Society of Labour Economics, New Delhi, 15-17 April, 1999.

Frances Lund and Smita Srinivas. *Learning from Experience: A Gendered Approach to Social Protection for Workers in the Informal Economy*. Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2000.

tion to the household reflect inherent weaknesses in the traditional family and community based form of social security. The same could be said of the elderly, whose special problems are discussed by R K A Subrahmanya. However, the difficult question of how far institutional care is to be recommended over family and community based care remains controversial as ever.

Although this book attempts simply to describe a range of experience with social security programmes, underlying this is a more fundamental concern which is articulated in the chapter on disaster management. In essence, tackling the question of social security for the poor requires that we tackle 'existing relationships' and 'develop new institutional structures that will allow disadvantaged victim groups to reduce their vulnerability by social security'. In very general terms, success in this direction will require decentralized efforts and accountability to users, a role for the state that is enabling rather than managerial, and a responsibility for financing that is distributed over all stakeholders, including some contribution from workers.

Finally, the book also suggests that we need systems that are 'suitable to our culture, social ethos and economy'. Perhaps the meaning of this last is that we need to look within ourselves for solutions that people have devised for themselves and build upon them, rather than trying to impose something based on 'theory'.

In sum, then, the simplicity of this book, the directness of presentation, and the clarity of its exposition, stands in contrast to the complexity of the issues and the difficulty of emerging with any clear or simple call to action. But given the importance of the issues one can only hope that it will lead to sustained debate as well as concrete action.

Ratna M. Sudarshan

ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN INDIA edited by George A. James. APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, 1999.

THE coverage of the book is wider than what its title suggests. It deals with environmental ethics in India's religious traditions and modern philosophical thought, the history of their decline and perspectives of development. The author became interested in the subject because he found that despite the high values associated with nature in India these came to be neglected in

recent centuries. His interest deepened when controversies started, thinkers like Ado Leopold, Lynn White and Roderick Nash pleading for abandonment of western ethics in favour of eastern, particularly Indian ethics, and the other camp led by John Passmore forcefully contending that Indian ethics exacerbated environmental crisis by its legitimisation of child marriage and moral injunctions to produce sons.

How could a country which allowed its citizens to starve in the streets or make a living by exhibiting their deformities, be credited with environmental ethics? The upholders of western thought felt that they had been able to establish a superior civilization by rejecting the view that nature is sacred, that humanity and nature are one, and that harming living things is intrinsically wrong. The latter group felt that eastern thoughts are deficient in rationality and have a propensity to focus on images rather than theories, on inimitable experiences rather than arguments, on metaphors rather than logically demonstrated truths, hence attempts to appropriate conceptual resources from Asian traditions were fraught with danger.

Both the schools of eastern and western thought shared the 'we and they' feeling. Thinkers like Callicott sought to replace this dichotomy and build a common ecological conscience by drawing on a multiplicity of traditions as well as the latter-day international scientific worldview. But here, too, Callicott faced problems. Hindu metaphysics has a propensity to regard the world as an illusion and its doctrine of *karma* fuels the urge to seek liberation from every kind of earthly bondage. How could these be then compatible with improving the environment? As against this, the Hindu view of transmigration of soul, which suggests that the soul of a human being might have come from the soul of an animal, implies an organic solidarity between human and animal life. Similarly Vedantic philosophical thought that all life is one implies reverence and care for all of nature.

Transcending all academic debates came India's *Chipko* movement which was universally acknowledged as rooted in Gandhian principles and the foundational concepts of Hindu philosophy. If Hindu teachings were life-denying, how could these give rise to such a pioneering environmental movement? These queries led the editor to delve into India's traditions and Indian problems. The book under review is the product

After raising these central questions, the editor, however, preferred to place the papers relevant to these questions in the latter section of the book. Only Vandana

Shiva's paper, which rightly claims that the pioneering environmental movement got its inspiration from the feminine principle of forestry which is the core of Indian philosophical thought, finds its place in the earlier section. The need to include the reprints of earlier published works of some authors perhaps led to this oddity in arrangement.

The paper by O P Dwivedi and B N Tiwari 'Environmental Protection in the Hindu Religion' provides a rich collection of quotations from the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Atharva Veda and a large number of Upanishads, Puranas and the epics to show that sanctity of life was embedded in Hindu tradition and that India's source books do not assign man any higher value than to other species of creation, therefore, humans have no right to take liberty with other species. The quotes show that the Hindus contemplate divinity as the one in many and the many in one, hence, there is no conflict with either monotheism or polytheism. The conflict between dualism and non-dualism also gets resolved in the Hindu view which argues that the creator is one with many manifestations or attributes.

The Hindu worship of different planets, animals and plants was intended to teach that the plants and stars, the sun and the moon were created by the same supreme reality who also made earth with its animals, birds, trees, flowers, rivers, mountains and men, and left them all to interact for further evolution. The doctrine of non-violence, the injunction against killing of animals for food; the use of plants in different religious functions, the regarding of every tree as the abode of some deity or the other, the concept of worshipping animals as 'mounts' of gods and goddesses, the celebration of *vana mahotsavas* were all intended to teach that the flora and fauna and the inanimate world have a protective role. Curiously, certain Puranas and penance codes forbade the polluting of wells, ponds and rivers, throwing excrement and dry garlands and washing clothes in the rivers. How could, then, India's environment in recent centuries, be so degraded? Dwivedi and Tiwari refrain from giving the answers in this paper for paucity of space but refer to their published work for those interested. Nevertheless, this paper is indeed a rich compilation of Indian scriptural verses about nature protection.

This reviewer would, however, like to point out that the term 'Hindu religion' is best avoided, for there is no religion called Hinduism. Hindu culture and Hindu philosophy of religions are more appropriate terms. Indulgence in loose expression, apart from creating confusion, breeds avoidable conflicts.

Madhav Gadgil's paper, 'The Indian Heritage of Environmental Ethics' points out that India lies at the trijunction of three bio-geographic realms—Ethiopian, Palaerctic and Indo-Malayan. As a result, its heritage of plant and animal diversity exceeds that of any other land mass of comparable size, equally that this tremendous biological diversity is paralleled by an equally remarkable diversity of cultures. This paper shows how 'traditional Indian society elaborated an organisation of resource use that strongly favoured the prudent utilization of natural resources'. It also shows how a cultural ethos favouring conservation of natural resources tends to evolve in societies inhabiting stable environments, where populations are close to saturation and not too mobile, where human groups are closed and when technologies are not fast changing. Interestingly, it also shows (i) how the castes in Indian society—which resembled tribes in being endogamous and traditionally self-governing groups and yet were unlike the tribes in not being occupants of exclusive territories—avoided competition over limited resources by developing specialised modes of resource use and by establishing relationships of barter, and (ii) how changed ecosystemic conditions gave rise to cultural ethos to suit conservation of resources. Notably, Jainism, which encodes extreme form of conservation, found its strongest hold in Rajasthan and eastern Uttar Pradesh, the two regions where population pressure was high in relation to productivity and where the danger of over-exploitation was perhaps the most acute.

The answers withheld by Dwivedi and Tiwari are provided by Madhav Gadgil. Modern, i.e. 'nature-conquering' science and technology, introduced by British rulers lowered the prestige of religion as well as undermined India's conservation ethics. The adverse impact of the cancellation of the local community's rights over forest resources and the unregulated exploitation of timber for British shipbuilding, railway sleepers and cantonments led to the destruction of forests, triggered devastating floods and droughts and drastically reduced the productivity of land. The introduction of monocultural plantations during British days, and the post-independence development policies favoured the urban, industrial and intensive agricultural sectors at the cost of small and marginal farmers, the rural landless, artisans and the nomads leading to over-exploitation of natural resources and poverty. India's environmental ethos, cut off from older traditions rooted in religious sentiments as well as from the latest in life sciences, lost its way.

Vandana Shiva's paper 'Women in Forest' delineates the difference between eastern and western ethics by quoting Tagore: 'Contemporary western civilization is built of brick and wood. It is rooted in the city. But Indian civilization has been distinctive in locating its source of regeneration, material and intellectual, in the forest, not in the city. The culture that has arisen from the forest has been influenced by the diverse processes of renewal of life which are always at play in the forest, varying from species to species, from season to season, in sight and sound and smell. The unifying principle of life in diversity, of democratic pluralism, thus became the principle of Indian civilization.'

The forests, as the highest expression of the earth's fertility and productivity, nurtured an ecological civilization in harmony with nature. Whereas the folklore of the temperate zones often regards forests as dark places of danger, in India's traditional view, people and forests are equal occupants of a communal habitat.

She further argues that lip homage to forestry will not do. What is needed is the feminine principle of forestry which means forestry for food production, for providing stable, perennial supplies of water for drinking and irrigation, and for providing the fertility directly as green manure or as organic matter cycled through farm animals.

Maintaining the diversity of plant species and animal species critical to this feminine principle, is, distinct from the masculine principle of forestry, which plants only a few species of trees for commercial returns, and is insensitive to the needs of people, animals and soils. No wonder, the real leaders of India's first 'save forest' (Chipko) movement were women. They were Mira Behn (one of Gandhi's closest disciples), Sarla Behn, Bimala Behn, Hima Devi, Gauri Devi, Ganga Devi, Bachni Devi, Itwari Devi, Chamuna Devi. The men of the movement like Sunderlal Bahuguna, Chand Prasad Bhatt, Ghanshyam Shailani and Dhoom Singh Negi have been their students and followers.

The author denounces limited-species plantations in the name of social forestry, the privatization of the commons to the detriment of poor people's sustenance in the name of wasteland development, and the genetic engineering of trees on the plea of producing plants of 'superior characteristics'. Any attempt that seeks to replace the natural-cycle-maintaining diverse resource flows by cash flows is unecological and anti-people.

Brief mention needs to be made of three other papers, particularly because their conclusions will be

readily accepted by Indians and possibly all people of the South. 'The Hindu Understanding of Population and Population Control' by S. Chandrasekhar says that though the quest for sons to escape punishment in hell often led to large average size of the Hindu family, the Hindus considered prevention of conception legitimate and the texts prescribed certain techniques and enjoined certain instructions to achieve this. Though the Hindus generally frowned upon abortion, it was considered necessary in certain cases. Non-surgical, herbal methods of abortion were in vogue. Since maintenance of inter-species balance and the limiting of the apex animal, man, is of the essence in ecology, this pointer should be considered important.

Chandrasekhar has a dig at the Christian Catholic Church which advances the 'sanctity of life' argument against abortion. It would have been admirable had this argument been invoked against all wars. Is only the life of the foetus sacred, not of the adult human beings? Shekhar Singh, in 'Sovereignty, Equality and Global Environment', pleads that the countries of the North must acknowledge their predominant role in degrading the global environment and that the world cannot be saved by them alone or for them alone. Also, 'Countries of the South, if they have to get out of the vicious cycle of low productivity and the resultant poverty, would have to transform their societies into efficient production units which *can satisfy the basic needs of the population in a sustainable manner*. For this, they need the support of each other, and of the countries of the North.' This reviewer would like to add that the yearning for access to the North's latest technologies often become fetters on the countries of the South. Moreover, these technologies are often unfriendly to nature and the poor, hence unsuitable.

Ramachandra Guha's paper, 'Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation' makes an interesting point. In the name of 'deep ecology' the so-called radical American environmentalism invokes eastern spiritual tradition and focuses on the preservation of unspoilt wilderness. Its anti-humanism becomes obvious in its advocacy of a 90 per cent reduction in human population to allow the restoration of pristine forest environment. This is naked imperialism and anti-poor aggressiveness. The author also unmasks those who blame only the fast growing population of the South for the environmental crisis. The question is not merely about the number of mouths to be fed but also of the character of the appetite. Countries with smaller population but gargantuan appetites can inflict greater damage to Mother Earth.

Anil Agarwal's paper, 'Human-Nature Interactions in a Third World Country' is a moving document of the Indian experience. Though written 16 years back, its relevance is even greater today. It should be 'compulsory reading' for every planner, bureaucrat, legislator, judicial officer to know how we are heading towards disaster and how in the name of ecology, we indulge in isolated thinking. Political activists who pontificate about class struggle ought to know how, in the name of development, the worst forms of robbery against the poor are being perpetuated.

This reviewer has some reservation about the last point in Agarwal's paper – the call for low-energy, low-resource-input urbanisation. How low-energy and low-input can urbanisation be? Howsoever low, it will still be far higher than in village life. The solution has to be found in improving amenities in rural areas, decreasing the attractions of urban life, and determinedly reducing the rate of growth of urbanisation.

The final two papers are 'Rabindranath Tagore's Vision of Ecological Harmony' by Amit Roy and 'Gandhian Environmentalism' by T.N. Khoshoo. Both the poet and the philosopher-statesman wanted nature to play an important role in the moulding of each individual. No doubt, certain differences between them on educational philosophy surfaced in their life time. But to conclude, as Amit Roy has done, that Tagore's vision of environmental education was wider than Gandhi's would not be proper. After all, it is Gandhi, whose pithy statements are now inspiring the world's ecological movements.

Gandhi's classic statements, 'The country's development has to be in harmony with nature,' 'Each member of a community has to live in communion with nature,' 'The earth has resources to meet everybody's needs, but not anybody's greed,' 'Man must voluntarily limit his wants,' 'We must learn to live lives of simplicity and austerity,' 'Everybody must do manual labour every day to earn the right to bread' are the beacon light for ecological movements.

Gandhi's pointed question 'How many planets will India require to match British type of development?' and his warning that 'Europeans will have to change their outlook, if they are not to perish under the weight of comforts to which they are becoming slaves,' show that Gandhi's vision was no less wide. It was a vision of an alternative civilisation encompassing polity, economy, technology and culture.

Sailendra Nath Ghosh

Further reading

Abrol, I.P. and V.V. Dhruva Narayanan Wasteland development technologies Delhi ICAR, 1990

Adisesiah, Malcolm S. Economics of wastelands development Delhi Lancer, 1987

Agarwala, V.P. Wastelands of India – opportunities and problems Delhi SPWD, 1986

Agarwala, Santosh Employment aspects of wasteland development a study of employment generation through integrated wasteland development scheme in Haryana Delhi IAMR, 1996

Ahmed, Sara Who participates? The case of rural women and NGO and joint forest management in Gujarat Anand IRMA, 1995

____ Workshop on mainstreaming gender in natural resource management (6-10 July 1998) Anand IRMA, 1999

Aislus Wastelands of Prakasam district, Andhra Pradesh – brief report, Delhi Aislus, 1987

AWD Wastelands development (national seminar, 16-18 October 1986) AWD, 1986

Ballabh, Shibani and Balooni Kulbhushan Why local resource management institutions decline a comparative analysis of van panchayats and forest protection committees Anand IRMA, 1999

Balooni, Kulbhushan and Katar Singh Role of NABARD in financing social forestry programme including afforestation of wastelands in India Anand IRMA, 1994

Balooni, Kulbhushan and Vishwa Ballabh Managing village plantations through tree growers' cooperatives emerging issues and policy implications Anand IRMA, 1998

- Basavaraj, Indira** Women's role in initiating and monitoring programme of land regeneration Delhi IEG, IGIDR, 1977
- Bhumbla, D.R. and Arvind Khare** Estimate of wastelands in India New Delhi SPWD, 1984
- CAZRI** Wastelands development and their utilization, Vol II National seminar – scientific papers Delhi ICAR, 1986
- Wastelands development and their utilization Vol I National seminar – scientific papers Delhi ICAR, 1986
- Centre for Study of Administration of Relief** Integration of drought relief with wastelands development (national workshop) Delhi CSAR
- Chopra, Kanchan, Gopal K. Kadekodi and M. N. Murty** Sukhomajri and Dhamala watershed in Haryana – a participatory approach to management Delhi IEG, 1988
- Chopra, Kanchan** Social forestry project – an approach to evaluation Delhi IEG, 1985
- Datye, K.R. and Suhas Paranjpe** Wasteland development and crop production (a model based on non-cash inputs suitable to marginal farmers in poorly endowed/drought area) Pune CASAD, 1986
- Desai, Nitin** Economics, environment and technology – linkages and priorities for action Foundation Day lecture, 16 April 1994 Delhi SPWD, 1994
- Development Alternatives** Report on integrated development of wastelands at the village level on a watershed basis in Datia district, Madhya Pradesh, vol I, II & III Delhi Development Alternatives, 1990
- Dogra, Bharat** Protecting forests and livelihood creating harmony, reducing conflict Foundation Day lecture Delhi SPWD, 1998
- Dubey, Ajay** Strengthening panchayat raj institutions strategies for NGOs Anand IRMA, 1995
- ESG-WWF** Wastelands in the media 1985 policy and planning land degradation reclamation/management programme, Delhi ESG, WWF, 1981
- Farrell, Stephen** Social forestry as a strategy for peoples' and wasteland development Community forestry field manual – 2, Gram Vikas, Mohuda, 1989
- FRIC** Fuelwood and fodder production from wastelands (national seminar, 30-31 May 1986) Dehradun FRIC, 1988
- Gadgil, Madhav** Deforestation problems and prospects Foundation Day lecture, 12 May 1989 Delhi SPWD, 1989
- Gautam, N.C.** Wastelands survey, mapping and monitoring using remote sensing techniques Delhi IEG, IGIDR, 1997
- Wastelands survey, mapping and monitoring using remote sensing techniques Delhi IEG, IGIDR, 1997
- Ghatak, Ram Narayan and Katar Singh** Contingent valuation methods of pricing canal irrigation water an exploratory study in Kheda district of Gujarat Anand IRMA, 1994
- Ghatak, Ram Narayan and Katar Singh** Economics of tubewell irrigation a case study in Hardoi district of Uttar Pradesh and Kheda district of Gujarat Anand IRMA, 1994
- GOI** Report of the task force on wastelands development in the ninth five year plan Delhi GOI, 1996
- Government of Karnataka** Cultivable wastelands in Karnataka – a sample study Bangalore Government of Karnataka, 1986
- Government of Rajasthan** Project for intensive wastelands development, district Dungarpur, submitted for SIDA support Jaipur Government of Rajasthan, 1985
- Government of Uttar Pradesh** Wasteland development programme in Chandrawal river watershed '87-88 to '89-90, unit Maudaha, district Hamirpur Lucknow Government of U P, 1991
- Guha, Ramachandra** Early environmentalists in India some historical precursors Foundation Day lecture, 15 June 1993 Delhi SPWD, 1993
- Gupta, Anil K.** Roots of creativity and innovation in Indian society a honey bee perspective Foundation Day lecture, 30 August 1996 Delhi SPWD, 1996
- Hegde, N.G.** Wasteland development – handbook Pune BAIF, 1987
- ICAR** Wastelands in arid and semi-arid zones and technologies for their improved utilization 10-30 June 1986 Delhi ICAR, 1986
- IIC** Integration of drought relief with wastelands development – national workshop Delhi IIC, 1990
- IICN** Voluntary agencies and wastelands developments 14-16 March 1986 IICN, 1986
- IIFS** Wastelands development in Maharashtra 21-22 May 1988 IIFS, 1988
- ILO** Women and wastelands development, 9-11 January 1991 Proceedings of ILO's national technical workshop Delhi ILO, 1991
- Women and wastelands development Rural women's organisation in development Delhi ILO, 1991

- Indian Law Institute** Wastelands development and the law Delhi Indian Law Institute, 1986
- Institute of Economic Growth** Orientation programme in joint forest management principles and policy issues 17-28 October 1994 Delhi Reading Material Part-I, IEG, 1994
- _____ Orientation programme in joint forest management principles and policy issues 17-28 October 1994 Delhi Reading Material Part-II, IEG, 1994
- Institute of Rural Management** Building and managing organisations for rural development National symposium, 13-14 December 1999 – 20th IRMA anniversary celebration (1979-99) Anand IRMA, 1999
- IRMA and UNICEF** Western regional consultation on fresh water issues – report of the workshop held at IRMA October 1999
- ISCA-SPWD** Wastelands in eastern India status and management Proceeding cum seminar, 12 June 1996 Delhi ISCD-SPWD, 1986
- Jodha, N.S.** Rural common property resources contributions and crises Foundation Day lecture, 16 May 1990 Delhi SPWD, 1990
- Kumar, Dinesh M. and Vishwa Ballabh** Sustainable development and use of water resources Sadguru's macro-initiatives in local water harnessing and management Anand IRMA, 2000
- Kumar, Dinesh M.** Irrigation with a manual pump impact of treadle pump on farming enterprise and food security in coastal Orissa Anand IRMA, 2000
- Mehta, M.C.** Human rights and environment Foundation Day lecture Delhi SPWD, 1997
- Ministry of Agriculture.** Report of the task force to study all aspects of grazing and fodder to evolve a national grazing policy Delhi GOI, 1984
- Ministry of Environment and Forests.** Developing India's wastelands National Wastelands Development Board 1985-89 Delhi GOI, 1989
- _____ Wastelands description and classification Delhi GOI, 1984
- Ministry of Food and Agriculture** Report on location and utilisation of wastelands in India, part I Punjab wastelands survey and reclamation committee Delhi GOI, 1960
- _____ Report on location and utilisation of wastelands in India, part II West Bengal wastelands survey and reclamation committee Delhi GOI, 1960
- _____ Report on location and utilisation of wastelands in India, part III Bihar wastelands survey and reclamation committee Delhi GOI, 1960
- _____ Report on location and utilisation of wastelands in India, part IV Mysore wastelands survey and reclamation committee Delhi GOI, 1960
- _____ Report on location and utilisation of wastelands in India, part VI Madhya Pradesh wastelands survey and reclamation committee Delhi GOI, 1960
- _____ Report on location and utilisation of wastelands in India, part VII Kerala wastelands survey and reclamation committee Delhi GOI, 1960
- _____ Report on location and utilisation of wastelands in India, part VIII Madras wastelands survey and reclamation committee Delhi GOI, 1960
- Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment** Wastelands development report of the high level committee – Mohan Dharma committee report Delhi GOI, 1995
- Ministry of Rural Development** Drought prone areas programme and desert development programme C H Hanumantha Rao committee report Delhi GOI, 1994
- _____ Wastelands atlas of India–2000 Delhi GOI, 2000
- NCLDBF** Seminar on financing of wastelands development programme by land development bank 25-26 April 1986 NCLDBF, 1986
- NWDB** National fund for afforestation and wastelands development – rules and regulations Delhi GOI and NWDB, 1990
- _____ People oriented strategy for regenerating India's wastelands Delhi NWDB, 1988
- _____ Report of the committee for examining all aspects of the involvement of industry in wastelands development and afforestation Delhi NWDB
- _____ Wasteland monitoring using remote sensing techniques Delhi NWDB, 1988
- _____ Wastelands development mission work programme 1990-91 Delhi NWDB, 1988
- _____ Wastelands challenges and response Delhi NWDB
- Patel, V.J.** Wasteland development through agro forestry Ahmedabad Gujarat Energy Development Agency, 1986
- Planning Commission** Approach paper to the ninth five year plan (1997-2002) Delhi GOI, 1997
- _____ Environment, forests and wastelands development for the formulation of the 8th five year plan Delhi GOI, 1991
- _____ Ninth five year plan – 1997-2002 draft prepared at the internal meeting of the Planning Commission

- _____. Wastelands development in the 9th five year plan (under chairmanship of S Z Qasim) Delhi GOI, 1996
- Poffenberger, Mark** India's forest keepers Foundation Day lecture, 14 July 1995 Delhi SPWD, 1995
- Raju, G.** Building and strengthening people's institutions in natural resource management 2-4 November 1998 Anand IRMA, 1999
- Rao, C.H. Hanumantha** Watershed development in India recent experience and emerging issues Foundation Day lecture Delhi SPWD, 2000
- Reddy, Prathap and Katar Singh** Building and managing organisations for rural development in the new millennium December 1999 Anand IRMA, 2000
- Sarin, Madhu and Renu Khanna** Wasteland development by women's group a case study of work done by Sarthi Santrampur taluka of Panchmahal district, Gujarat ILO, 1991
- Saxena, N.C.** Participatory issues in joint forest management in India Foundation Day lecture Delhi SPWD, 1999
- Saxena, Rakesh** Joint forest management in Gujarat policy and managerial issues Anand IRMA, 2000
- SCIR** Agrotechnologies for wasteland development Delhi CSIR, 1986
- Shah, Amita** Moisture yield interaction and farmers' perception lessons from watershed project in Gujarat Ahmedabad Gujarat Institute of Development Research, 1997
- Shah, Tushar** Collective action village commons community fodder farms in Kheda district, Gujarat Anand IRMA, 1989
- _____. Efficiency and equity impact of groundwater markets a review of issues, evidence and policies Anand IRMA, 1989
- Singh, Chhatrapati, Thomas Paul and Pawan Prinja** Wastelands development and legal policy Delhi Indian Law Institute, 1985
- Singh, Katar** Managing common pool irrigation tanks – a case study in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal Anand IRMA, 1991
- _____. Managing dryland watershed development programme lessons of Karnataka experience. Anand IRMA, 1988
- _____. Watershed approaches to sustainability on renewable common pool natural resources lessons of India's experience Anand IRMA, 1991
- Singh, Manmohan** Environment and the new economic policies Foundation Day lecture, 17 June 1992 Delhi SPWD, 1992
- Sinha, S.P. and P.K. Verma** Common pooled resource management at Chakriya Vikas operational design Results, constraints and solutions – land regeneration programme Delhi IEG, 1997
- Society for Participatory Research in Asia** Women and wasteland Delhi PRIA
- SPWD** Afforestation of usar wastelands proceedings of the seminar cum-workshop, Lucknow, 1985 Delhi SPWD
- _____. Dryland management options in wastelands development, Jawaja block (a case study for international conference on economics of drylands) Delhi SPWD, 1986
- _____. Economics of wastelands development a seminar proceedings Delhi SPWD, 1984
- _____. Landless people and wastelands development (National workshop, 3-4 April 1986) Delhi SPWD, 1986
- _____. Participation of women in wastelands development in Bichiwara block, Dungarpur district, Rajasthan Delhi SPWD, 1991
- _____. Small scale watershed development Proceeding of the national workshop, Surajkund 30 October-1 November 1989 Delhi SPWD, 1989
- _____. Wastelands development in ravine land of Baroda district, Gujarat Delhi SPWD
- _____. Wastelands development role of voluntary agencies (Viksat seminar 1984) Delhi SPWD, 1984
- _____. Wastelands in Andhra Pradesh Delhi SPWD, 1985
- _____. Wastelands in Maharashtra Delhi SPWD, 1985
- _____. Wastelands in Rajasthan and peoples problems Delhi SPWD, 1985
- _____. Wastelands micro-level planning for integrated development (national symposium) Delhi SPWD, 1990
- Tiwari, R.N. and O.A. Mascarenhas** Wasteland development and environmental management through community forestry Dehradun Natraj, 1983
- Vaidyanathan A.** Integrated watershed development some major issues Foundation Day lecture, 1 May 1991 Delhi SPWD, 1991
- Verma, Madhu** Economic and environmental costs and benefits of common property resources local, national and global perspectives – an assessment Delhi IEG, IGIDR, 1997
- Yashvantrao Chavan Prathisthan** Land, water use and wasteland development in India (national convention, 2-3 June 1993) Bombay YCP, 1993

Comment

Policy for nature protection

A FIRST step towards protecting nature is to define the national ideal of lifestyle as one involving a voluntary limitation of wants, consistent with the requirements of radiant health. The question of lifestyle was bypassed at the dawn of Independence. Since a vacuum cannot exist for long in nature, it was soon filled by an acceptance of the West's consumerist lifestyle which breathes depletion of natural resources from its every pore.

Mahatma Gandhi was correct when he said it was possible to meet everybody's needs but not anybody's greed. Alberto Moravia said 'Consumerist civilisation is excremental'. Altheilstone Spilhaus, erstwhile President of the American Association for Advancement of Science, expressed similar sentiments in a different language. 'As the standard of living (of the western countries) goes up, the amount of waste and consequent pollution must go up.'

Though consumerism brings in its trail physical ailment and mental unhappiness, its immediate charm is compelling. Observance of simplicity and austerity brings a glow to life. It saves society from the 'demonstration effects of conspicuous consumption' as also society's resources for uplifting the poor to the consumption standards needed for a healthy life. Without this ideal, both the rich and the poor destroy nature from different ends.

Since inter-species balance is a fundamental ecological principle, the growth of human species needs to be controlled. As a predator species, it is at present the most destructive of all animals. But a population control policy can be successful only if tempered by an understanding that the poor people's uncertainty for the morrow is a great stimulus for unrestrained procreation. Distributive justice, women's education, persistent educational campaign among and by the people, and use of harmless herbal methods of contraception are essential components of the programme. The present push-button techniques of big hoardings and

propaganda through TV as a partial substitute for personal approach are often counterproductive, for these stimulate sex appetite in the target groups themselves. Their ultimate effect is destruction of nature.

It is necessary to enunciate the principle that development would need to be based primarily on biological resources and renewable forms of energy, as against the West's primary reliance on mineralogical resources. Mineralogical resources need to be treated as fixed deposits which can be drawn upon only in times of emergency. Basing development primarily on mineralogical resources inevitably leads to concentration of economic and political power in a few hands, an increase in unemployment, increase in disparity between nations and between different strata of people within the country. Reliance on exhaustible energy has two dangers. If a country builds its life and production processes on exhaustibles, civilisation faces steep collapse when they near exhaustion. Moreover, exhaustibles – mainly fossil fuels – release large amounts of pollutants which affect the atmosphere.

Over the last one and a half centuries, we have drawn so heavily on petroleum-derived fuels that their exhaustion is in sight. Therefore, it is necessary to take a three-step policy decision regarding oil and gas, namely, (i) to rigidly control the rate of growth of their use (2-3%) for the first three or four years, (ii) thereafter, to bring their use to 'zero growth' level, and (iii) finally, to bring their use to lower than the present level and steadily downwards thence.

A national maxim needs to be established that in energy use there must be a ceiling and a floor for every individual. Energy use, beyond a certain limit, leads to social inequity and the concerned individual's atrophy of limbs. Energy use, below a certain floor, becomes backbreaking and oppressive to the individual. This is the way to creating energy consciousness and curbing extravagance in energy consumption in the interest of nature conservation.

Energy use by society must be guided by the consciousness that the more energy we use, the more entropic the biosphere becomes. Without countering the entropy, the biosphere becomes uninhabitable. Hence, primacy should be given to low-entropy, low-concentration energy in energy use planning. The low-concentration energy forms are, in fact, renewable energy types. Currently there is such an excessive emphasis on energy need that awareness about entropy is completely lost. It must be curbed.

A decision should be taken to disallow electricity, the premium-grade energy, for activities which can use other forms of energy. Use of electricity for cooking should be banned. Running of air conditioners, refrigerators and televisions should be on stored solar energy. If cooking is done through the use of solar cooker, the use of coal, oil, LPG and so on would be drastically reduced. Use of solar water heaters can also reduce electricity consumption. These measures will have a great influence on nature conservation. A policy of incentives and penalties – the latter in case of non-compliance – should be adopted to spur house-builders and householders into providing spaces and facilities for the installation, and even retrofitting in old buildings, of solar devices, particularly solar cookers and solar water heaters.

Energy planning needs to be changed – *from* the present pattern of extrapolation from levels of past consumption *to* a pattern of estimating the end-use and pinpointing the types of energy which can serve each purpose with the least social and economic costs. The planning for end-uses and their matching with suitable forms of energy will drastically scale down the needs for electricity generation.

The pricing of each form of energy should be consistent with its long run replacement cost. (For example, when we know that it will cost over \$40 per barrel to deliver a synthetic replacement, viz. oil from coal, there is no point in pricing it lower.) This was a way to restrain oil consumption and pollution. Disregarding this advice, the government encouraged the use of small cars instead of mopeds and mass transit systems, in the process stepping up the nation's oil consumption and pollution. As a result, we have landed in the present trap in which depletion of the national exchequer and repeated price increases leading to price inflation of each commodity has been taking place, apart from pollution.

The concept of a national energy grid needs to be subordinated to the concept of on-site integration of different forms of energy. This means that in every village, in every ward of a town or city, there has to be an

accounting of use-needs and availability of locally producible quanta of energy – biogas for cooking, lighting or mechanical drives, solar energy through solar cooker, solar collector, solar water heater, photovoltaics, wind energy, locally producible hydel, photosynthetic energy through planting and replanting. Only the balance requirements need to be met by other sources of energy. Coal briquettes produced by low-temperature carbonisation plants should be encouraged and made cost-effective.

A policy of local integration *first*, based on diverse sources of cheap and renewable energy forms, would make for far greater savings to the national exchequer, far greater benefit to each family including the poor, and a cleaner atmosphere.

Luckily, 'dramatic breakthroughs' are reported in micropower technology, which allows the generation of electricity from small fuel cells and small gas turbines. Reports of big advances in fuel cells in which hydrogen is combined with oxygen, producing only water as waste product, has raised hopes. *Pari passu*, reports have appeared about solar cells (with gallium arsenide) becoming nearly competitive with primary batteries. Even if all these reports prove to be grossly exaggerated, it is possible to begin local integration in every village with what we already have.

The technology of controlled coal gasification underground needs to be perfected in order to minimise pollution in the atmosphere. This gasification must ensure that coal resources do not get wasted.

Since it is known that three units of primary energy (coal, oil) yield only one unit of electricity while the other two get dissipated as waste heat, it is necessary to build all thermal power stations on a 'cogeneration' principle. The generation of electricity and steam conjointly makes for the best utilisation of the primary fuel. This would also lower pollution. While electricity is to be used for lighting and driving machines, steam can be used for chilling plants, for washing clothes and in industry. For cogeneration, the plants would have to be smaller because the cost of a network of pipelines over long distances would be prohibitive. This will also be conducive to decentralised development. Thus, it will serve a triple purpose – utmost energy economy, decentralised development, and lowering of pollution.

Transitional technologies are already available, promising among which is the fluidised bed technology for burning coal, which can be scaled down to a tiny household device or scaled up to power giant industrial complexes.

The building of massive power plants needs to be discontinued. Super-thermal power plants lead to massive pollution in the production zone. Their fly ash distorts the local landscape, chokes the waterways and decimates aquatic life. Moreover, these necessitate very high voltage transmission lines whose corona discharge causes cancer around the powerlines.

Hydro-electricity is frequently advocated as a renewable form of energy, regardless of other costs. Since massive hydels involve serious ecological externalities, it is necessary to plan as many mini- and micro-hydels as possible. In Lalitpur district of U.P., a farmer, Mangal Singh, has devised a multipurpose water turbine which can be used for either producing electricity or pumping water from a canal if there is a waterhead of one metre or even less.

In industrial planning, decisions must first be taken as to which industries we need and those we do not, as also the scale. Chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides which have come to be equated with food production, need not be manufactured at all, for they strike at the very root of ecologically sound development. Biofertilisers would make them redundant. Diversity through familiar polycultural farming would minimise pests and make pesticides unnecessary. In any case, some 'pests' are needed to eliminate the weak plants and maintain the vigour of plant life. Such planning would be a significant step towards nature protection.

The dominant concept of integrating industrial complexes for maximum benefits to capital must yield place to the concept of integrating industrial units with local economies. This will mean smaller industries and de-concentration of pollutants. The concept of *social* accounting of economic and environmental costs and benefits should be given precedence over the concept of productivity of capital.

Integrative farming, i.e. integration of agri-horti-flori-pisci-sylvi-culture and poultry farming and animal husbandry should be promoted because, in this system, the waste products of one become food for another and the basic inputs become available on site. This has a symbiotic effect and is most ecological. Unfortunately, our peasant holdings are tiny, making such integration on individual farms difficult. This is why joint farming and pooling of farmers' resources is necessary. Diversification of food habits, including sprouts and fermented foods in diets, and widening the nutrition base by exploring wild edibles will improve health and enhance nature protection.

When planning for irrigation, we need to remember that while irrigation is essential, it often becomes ruinous to soil systems if the principle of utmost frugality in water use is overlooked. According to FAO statistics, 50% of the world's irrigated acreage has become saline and infertile. The concept of flush irrigation must, therefore, be abandoned in favour of small doses of irrigation as and when needed. It gets support from the fact that crops, excluding paddy, just need moisture, not flow irrigation. In Wardha, the Centre of Science for Villages has innovated an earthen device which oozes water to the plant roots but stops supplying moisture when the plant-root zone has reached saturation—a good example of peoples' science.

The concept of big dams and trunk canals accordingly needs modification. The need is for conservation of water *in situ*. Just as there are fluids in each of the billions of cells in our body, there should be millions of tanks in our catchment areas and crop fields. Besides, for recharging aquifers and storing water underground in evaporation-free conditions, we need afforestation in every village. For improving the waterholding capacity of soils, we need to improve the organic matter status of the soils (popularly called humus). These are crucial for conservation of natural resource systems.

Big dams are not only ruinous to natural systems but also counter-productive in monsoonal rainfall areas. To quote P.R. Pisharoty, an internationally acclaimed Indian meteorologist, (i) 'Half of the total monsoon rainfall drops in heavy spells, whose total duration is only 20 hours (in a year) distributed over the four monsoonal months, (ii) the median size of the Indian raindrops during the heavy spells is three to five times that of the raindrops in England, and (iii) the kinetic energy of the large raindrops in India is a thousand to two thousand times that of the raindrops in England.' These being so, 'once water in humid tropics gets into the river, only 30% of it can be made use of.'

'The riverine reservoirs constructed by way of dams across the river, can never hold more than 20% of the flows. The rest of the riverflow during the floods has to be let off via large spillways, in the interest of saving the dam.' Recent floods in West Bengal have shown that big dams, while containing small floods, promote mega-floods during a heavy downpour, refuting the argument that dams are needed for storing run-off water.

The big dam has no case except massive electricity generation. But this has to address the questions: Power at what social and environmental cost? Power for what use? How much power is needed for comfort-

able but low-entropy living? Has any fool-proof system been worked out to ensure that the power-fed industries on river banks discharge only treated/clean effluents into the river to prevent it from becoming a sewer? *Elimination* of big dams – which tend to kill self-flowing rivers, quicken the sedimentation process of the downstream river, build up salinity in the river basin, help intrusion of salt water from the sea into the delta – is itself a step towards nature protection

Maintenance of wetlands amid landmass is of deep ecological import and economic value. At this time, when wetlands are being filled to extend human settlements, these need to be maintained. Economic studies have revealed that their productivity is greater than that of land surfaces

Afforestation of the mountain slopes, hill ranges and wastelands, afforestation of river banks and canal sides, multi-species tree farming around hamlets are the most important measures for nature protection. These would increase the fertility of the adjoining lands and absorb rainwater. The restoration of 'farm ponds' for capturing run-off soil and recycling of soil and water, irrigation tanks in the villages, lakes at the foot of hillocks, all of which provide interfaces between land masses and water bodies, are helpful for nature protection as well as man's economic activities

When the craze is for high speed, we need to promote slow-speed, medium-speed and high-speed transportation. Slow-speed, water-driven, least-commercial-energy-consuming transportation systems must be rejuvenated. Not merely will this mean saving of energy, it will also rejuvenate the canals. A network of circular and criss-crossing canals, apart from minimising run-off of water to the sea, will encourage water-driven transportation, saving of commercial energy and lower pollution

For communication, however, we need the speediest and the most sophisticated facilities. The faster and the more widely shared the channels of communication, the lower the need for transport use. Saving energy expenditure on transportation is a means of nature protection

Solar architecture is a big step towards protection of nature. Use of solar principles for insulation and natural airconditioning and construction of mud houses on Laurie Baker's model, frees man from ecologically destructive 'concrete jungles' while providing comfort. The Tata Energy Institute's (TERI's) model house at Gurgaon is a pioneering effort in this direction

In urban areas, mini-plants for sewerage treatment should be provided in each ward for recovery of

biogas and cleaning of dirty water by microbiological treatment to keep the river clean.

For garbage disposal, a practice should be introduced for separation, in each household, of kitchen wastes, paper, metallic wastes and plastics to make recycling possible of whatever is recyclable. The use of plastics as carry-over bags and of styrofoam cups should be banned because they are non-biodegradable and highly polluting.

Sailendra Nath Ghosh

Police Sub-Culture*

A QUESTION that continues to puzzle the public as well as close observers of Indian law-enforcement agencies is why the police does not change its behaviour and functional styles even half-a-century after the end of colonial rule. Why do Indian policemen not give up their adversarial relationship with and crude treatment of the citizen now that the country is governed in accordance with a modern Constitution that guarantees fundamental freedom and human dignity to every Indian? Why have our police not grown out of the overbearing, oppressive, venal and often unlawful attitude and behaviour that characterised its pre-independence forerunners, despite the tremendous political, social and economic changes since Independence?

Indian policemen have been exhorted to change and reinvent themselves as friends and guides of the common man, much in the manner and style of the British Bobby by umpteen political leaders at umpteen parades, seminars, workshops and public functions. There have been any number of public protests and agitation against police misconduct and police leaders too have issued numerous circulars, orders, warnings and exhortations asking policemen to change their behaviour and attitude. And yet, the Indian police doesn't change. Why?

More than two generations after the departure of the British, there is no earthly reason why the present generation of policemen should continue to emulate the colonialist mindset of British Indian law-enforcers. The education levels and social background of police appointees of all ranks have substantially changed since Independence and mostly for the better. Training inputs and methods too have greatly improved with added emphasis on fundamental val-

* K S Dhillon, a former DG Police, Punjab, was also former Vice Chancellor of Bhopal University M P and former Fellow IAS Shimla

ues of integrity, courtesy, helpfulness, legality and public service. Yet, just a few years after joining the force, nearly every entrant turns out to be a perfect stereotype. The community often blames the government for failure to provide a civilised and just police to society, while governments routinely hold police leadership responsible for the highly unsatisfactory state of affairs in the belief that they could bring about a change for the better if only they wished to. For isn't the police a disciplined service?

More than other factors like job-stress, organisational structure and the dynamics of power, it is the characteristic sub-culture of police organisations that shapes the attitudes, values, approaches, conduct and behaviour of policemen and officials. While it cannot be denied that an individual's deviant behaviour springs from his personality traits or out of a failure to adjust to his work situation, and the basic values imbibed during early life continue to shape his actions in the subsequent years, it is no less certain that his immediate social and work groups too exercise a major influence on his behaviour.

Also, the greater the group solidarity and the greater the alienation^{**} of the group-member from the community at large, the greater is the impact of the group on his behaviour. One major finding of various sociological studies of the American police is that police recruits are neither more deviant nor more authoritarian than people with similar socio-economic background who do not join the police. It is not so much the men in the police who are good or bad as the pre-mises and designs of the system in which they are placed, apparently, the same is true of the Indian police.

Two main features of police work in India contribute to the growth and development of a distinct police sub-culture – the feeling among policemen of being a 'pariah', and the incompatible demands made on them. The occupation is accorded a low esteem, much lower than the importance of the police function and lower than that accorded to other comparable groups. The living and working conditions provided to the police are poor. In most towns, large numbers of policemen can be found living in slums because they cannot afford better accommodation. Many police stations and reserve lines are over a hundred years old and in a dilapidated state for lack of repairs and maintenance. Still, a very large number of policemen have to

live in them, knowing full well that they were declared unfit for human occupation several years back.

At public functions, police officers are often accorded lower status than their counterparts in other services or departments. Also, the police come in for constant, often undeserved, criticism at the hands of the press and politicians who don't realise that a person who complains against the police does not necessarily tell the whole truth. Such social isolation expectedly produces a 'pariah' feeling among policemen.

Powerful demands are constantly made on policemen to serve incompatible ends. Formally, the police are expected to be agents of law – to enforce all laws and treat all men as equal before the law. Actually, the police are treated as agents of the ruling party or the government, expected to ignore some laws and many law-breakers. The Punjab Police Commission stated, 'We are of the view that political interference by politicians of different parties, and perhaps more so by the party in power, exists at all levels of police administration.' According to the M P Police Commission, 'The police is still considered to be the instrument of the ruling party.' The Delhi Police Commission observed, 'Allegations have been made before us that some politicians resort to the device of securing the assistance of goondas and bad characters who are given protection by the police. This protection is the result of influence exercised by politicians and policemen. We are not in a position to say to what extent this allegation is true, and if there is a large substance of truth in it, but the evil undoubtedly exists.'

The U P Police Commission found that 'Ample evidence has come before us, almost from all quarters, that extraneous influence at various levels in day to day police actions have become the order of the day.' Similarly, the police is formally expected to avoid unnecessary arrests and eschew third-degree methods but in actual practice it is under pressure to somehow solve the cases, if it does not arrest suspects and rough them up, it is accused of being mixed up with criminals. In a heterogeneous society, people with different value-frames live side by side. Gambling, prostitution, illicit distillation, smuggling and so on thrive only because many sections of society support these activities as clients, while others – generally, more vocal – condemn these activities as nefarious and expect the police to put them down. The National Police Commission (1978-81) too made equally forthright and blunt observations.

The awareness that he is a 'pariah' and is judged in terms of inconsistent standards leads a policeman to believe that he has chosen an occupation which sets

^{**} Alienation refers to a general condition where there is a lack of identification with or commitment to shared goals and beliefs.

him apart from the others. To live with himself and his group, he must develop acceptable and consistent standards by which to evaluate himself which, unfortunately, do not conform to the expectations of the community. In adapting to this situation, policemen come to adopt norms different from those of the community, to develop and subscribe to a police 'sub-culture'.

If the net effect of the values implicit in police sub-culture were good, we would be one up in the game. In the absence of a strong moral bias, however, this is unlikely. Instead, what one has come to expect from policemen is an attempt to extract their 'dues' from society, a collective contempt for the norms of the community, a tendency to justify and defend their actions on the basis of 'practical considerations' rather than principles, and a distrust of outsiders who judge them on the basis of abstract values rather than the 'reality' of the policemen's world. Recurring cases of use of excessive force, extortion, rude and offensive behaviour, unnecessary use of handcuffs, the perfunctory manner in which public complaints against the police are dealt with and the reluctance to thrash things out in the open, match this interpretation well.

In one training course, eminent men from various fields were invited to address police officers on various aspects of police-community relations. It was observed that at the end of each such lecture, the participant officers questioned the guest-lecturer in a way which tended to defend what the police had been doing. The overall impression from the question-answer sessions was one where police officers presented their 'practical' difficulties to the outsider, claiming on that basis, that the police could not but do what they were actually doing, that nothing more ought to be expected from them.

Police leadership, particularly if it can mitigate the 'pariah feeling', prescribe clear-cut rules for resolving the problem of incompatible ends, or instil in the rank and file a shared outlook or ethos that provides for them a common definition of the situations that they are likely to encounter and guides them in their conduct without fear of being let down, can have a major impact on police sub-culture. But police leadership today is not effective in this sense. A policeman learns, then, from his work-group the distinction between explicit and implicit values in his job: what is expected by laws and regulations and what is tolerated, accepted or, indeed, expected by his co-workers and superiors.

He learns whose car he may *challan* and whose not, against whom an offence of embezzlement of funds may be registered and against whom not, and

how to investigate cases in such a manner that all references to VIPs and their sons are left out. The kind of norms fostered by this sub-culture in specific areas of police work depends on the degree of alienation of police from the public concerned and the general outcome (for the police) of the interactions between them.

One body with which the police are constantly interacting is the law, which prescribes the methods which police may or may not adopt to secure their objectives and which sits in judgement on their actions in arresting and prosecuting offenders. If one were to ask a policeman about his broad functions, the answer invariably would be: prevention and detection of crime, maintenance of public order, regulation of traffic and security of state. An ordinary citizen too would probably define the police functions in the same way. If one were to ask a judicial officer about his functions in relation to criminal law, he would unhesitatingly answer: protection of the rights of the individual. There is, therefore, an inherent contradiction in the approach of policemen, lawyers and judges.

The policeman wants to, and the public expects him to, prevent and detect crime and maintain public order, he likes to feel that he protects society against crime, to him the protection of the rights of criminals is of secondary importance. This role-perception is reinforced by the public. The judges and the lawyers, on the other hand, are primarily concerned with the protection of the rights of the accused (who is presumed to be innocent until proved guilty), the operational problems of the police in prevention and detection of crime and maintenance of public order are of secondary importance to them. To complicate matters, Indian procedural law prescribes such rigorous standards that a policeman who follows its dictates can hardly solve a crime and thereby win public esteem and organisational rewards.

A small police station (p.s.) situated not far from a settlement of an ex-criminal tribe used to record only one or two dacoities every year. In one particular year, the p.s. recorded 11 dacoities and none of them was worked out. The station officer's explanation was that he was recording crimes freely (which was in pursuance of the departmental directives) and that he was not using third-degree methods in the interrogation of suspects (who belonged to an ex-criminal tribe settled nearby and who were notoriously hard to 'break'). As courts would not convict on any evidence other than recovery of property, he was unable to prosecute any case. Would the station officer be rewarded for his conscientiousness?

In fact, Indian procedural law is unique in that it obliges the police to write the statement of each witness and furnish a copy thereof to the accused, along with the name and address of the witness. That goondas and criminals can bribe or coerce witnesses to go back on their statement pending trial (which may last for several years or even decades) and thereby defeat the ends of justice, is completely overlooked. One Police Commission, indeed, recommended that police should provide protection to the witnesses.

However, at the end of 1978, as many as 12,40,000 cases under the Indian Penal Code alone were pending trial in courts throughout the country and if one were to take into account the fact that trials last for years, that in every case there are several witnesses (possibly residing in far-flung areas) and that they can be intimidated not only by direct assault on their person but also by other threats, the impossibility of acting on this suggestion can be easily visualised.

The result is that when dealing with organised crimes such as smuggling, dacoities or terrorist activity, where criminals do not hesitate to kill a person on the barest suspicion of being an informer or helper of the police, the police come to learn about criminals' activities only under conditions of absolute secrecy. While police might know (or think that it knows) who has committed the crime and who has aided and abetted it, it is simply unable to adduce formal evidence. Not surprisingly, it resents the laws which leads to this situation.

Further, the policeman reaches the scene of a crime soon thereafter, and is exposed to the grief and terror in the raw. If an informer is abducted by dacoits and left with his head crushed or if a class-enemy is beheaded by Naxalites, it is the policeman – not a lawyer or a judge – who reads the terror in the sightless eyes of the victim. If a child is thrown up in the air by dacoits and shot while its mother looks on, it is the policeman who coaxes the hapless woman to tell the full story and shakes in horror.

By the time the matter comes to court, the horror has worn off and the law can well concern itself with the rights of the accused without being overburdened by the weight of the crime in terms of human suffering caused and terror evoked. So, while the policeman is concerned with getting the accused punished, to justify himself in his own eyes and in the eyes of his public, he does not experience similar concern on the part of others. If the accused is let off on account of legal technicalities, or because the witnesses have been suborned by the accused while the trial is delayed through

legal tactics, he feels terribly let down by the legal system. His judgement has been negated and he has fallen in his own eyes, as also in the eyes of his public.

The net result is a deep alienation of the police from procedural law. The police sub-culture regards procedural law as irrelevant and whimsical – it can be circumvented and evidence can be fabricated to satisfy its whims and secure conviction of persons whom the police knows to be guilty. And, if some criminals escape punishment under the law the police must find other ways of dealing with them, i.e., if it is to protect society against their depredations.

This alienation has other consequences also. When the British reorganized the police after the events of 1857, a prime objective was to ensure its unfailing loyalty to the government. This concern for police loyalty has remained, as reflected in passing of the Police Forces (Restriction of Rights) Act in 1966. At the same time, the confusion between the state and the government has never been resolved and police loyalty to the government of the day is regarded as sacrosanct.

In this climate, and because of their alienation from the public, the police have found it difficult to transfer their loyalty from the government in power to the state and the common citizen. Second, as sociologists point out, the more the outgroup attacks the ingroup, the greater become the differences between them and the greater is the solidarity of the ingroup. The more the public criticism grows in volume and harshness, the wider is the gulf between the police and the public and the police fraternity becomes a solidified front, united against public criticism and providing solace to members whose feelings have been hurt.

The conflicts arising out of changes in socio-economic order in a heterogeneous society also pose problems for the police who must prevent such conflicts from boiling over and disrupting public order. At least one party to a conflict invariably perceives the police as a force for 'status quo' and rejects its moral authority to intervene. It refuses to conform to police directions. The police must then use legal sanctions against the party. If, however, the decision to invoke legal sanctions is not backed up by the people, the government and the court, and if the people do not come forward to bear witness or the case is withdrawn 'in public interest', it no longer sees itself, nor is seen by the public as reinforcing the social norms of right and wrong conduct through punishment of the deviant.

The moral authority of the police is thus chipped away until only legal power, which is in itself not sufficient, remains. Anxious about his self-image as pro-

tector of the society, as much as for his career prospects, frustrated by the legal-justice system, alienated from the intelligentsia which is constantly critical, shorn of moral authority and charged with the function of enforcement, the policeman sinks into brutality

K.S. Dhillon

Attention points

AFTER the Gujarat earthquake of 26 January 2001, relief work is about to start and the state rehabilitation strategy is being formulated. Learning from previous rehabilitation efforts, particularly the Latur earthquake, is at the core of designing sustainable policy initiatives and effective mechanisms that work for people.

After the Latur earthquake on 30 September 1993, SPARC-SSP (Swayam Shikshan Prayog) was appointed Community Participation and Monitoring Consultant¹ for the repair and strengthening (R&S) programme covering 1300 villages and 2,00,000 households by the Government of Maharashtra. The project was supported by the World Bank, UNDP, DFID and other international agencies. After the completion of the earthquake rehabilitation project, in 1998, SSP steered women's groups and communities involved in reconstruction towards a broad based community development strategy².

An 'owner driven' reconstruction policy will allow us to use post-disaster rehabilitation as an opportunity for people to rebuild their houses and communities. At the same time, it is important to work out a timeline for rehabilitation. Relief operations should last up to two-three months and reconstruction of houses should be completed in two years. Until this time, people are likely to be housed in temporary shelters. Past experience shows that for this to happen, efficient planning should replace the current centralized planning at all levels set up in the rescue phase. Special efforts are needed to set up decentralised units with personnel trained in disaster management to handle flow of resources and bridge the gap between government and the affected people.

* Swayam Shikshan Prayog, Mumbai, ssp2000@vsnl.com

1. This consultancy was implemented by Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres through its rural programme SSP.

2. Today, SSP continues to partner with 594 self-help groups involved in addressing practical issues around credit, livelihoods, monitoring health, education, water and sanitation projects through active involvement in local governance and development in Latur and Osmanabad districts in Maharashtra.

Relief as a basis for rehabilitation

As we enter the relief phase, we need use this stage to lay the foundation for a community driven rehabilitation strategy, instead of viewing relief as a temporary phase before we embark on a permanent rehabilitation plan. Building temporary shelters, Building public/community facilities to demonstrate earthquake resistant technology, Addressing health and psycho social issues, Strengthen community institutions, Assessment and documentation – deaths and damage to structures.

Disaster proof temporary shelters provide the much-needed 'breathing space' for affected people to stabilize their lives. In villages where all the structures are destroyed, temporary shelters may be the only accommodation that people live in for the next one to two years. Region specific technology and material options need to be explored before recommending alternatives. Community involvement in putting up temporary shelters is the start of involving people in rebuilding activities.

At this stage, together with providing shelter, access to basic services, health centres, schools, childcare, community centres, and fuel, rations and electricity, water and sanitation etc. is crucial to recovery. Similarly, exploring livelihood options, retraining labour and skilled artisans for earthquake safe reconstruction are crucial steps.

Building public/community facilities with demonstration of earthquake resistant technology. Demonstration of earthquake resistant technology in public buildings is a kick-start to all the reconstruction that will follow in the area. Restoring schools and health centres is usually a priority. We would strongly recommend community centres as part of building confidence in communities. This could act as a leveller in breaking existing social/religious/caste barriers.

Addressing health and psychosocial issues. Health prevention includes provision of safe water and sanitation, tackling health epidemics, and restoring access to services, especially for disabilities. A simple yet effective way of tackling post disaster trauma would be to (i) Provide community centres where women could meet and voice their concerns, (ii) Involve people in community rebuilding activities, (iii) Volunteers from youth groups, Mahila Mandals can be trained in primary health volunteers, (iv) Provide minimum facilities for trauma counselling linked to primary health centres.

Strengthening community institutions. Form village committees (with members of gram panchayats,

In memoriam

Indrajit Gupta – gentleman comrade

HOW does one write about a colossus? Especially one who has just left us? My memories of 'Comrade Indrajit' go back to the summer of 1973 when I first met him. Like other student activists, I was in awe of the great man. A First from Kings College, Cambridge, who like his contemporaries Jyoti Basu, Mohan Kumaramangalam and N K Krishnan had become a communist under the influence of the legendary Rajni Palme Dutt, Indrajit returned to India to become a firebrand trade union leader, and later the greatest parliamentarian in Indian history.

Indrajit Gupta served as a Member of Parliament from 1960, with a break only from 1977 to 1980 when he lost as a consequence of the CPI's pro-Emergency policies. In Parliament, he was known for his erudition, his painstaking preparation and his wit, together making for a devastating display of oratory. Taken as a whole, his speeches will amount to the most sustained and cogent presentation of popular issues and demands made in the Indian Parliament. Civil to the core, he was never one to breach decorum or storm the well of the House. Even as Home Minister, when the Congress objected to a statement that he had made, Indrajit after some reflection had no hesitation in standing up and apologizing. It is a recognition of his unparalleled contribution that even the Shiv Sena, implacable enemy to the communists, joined others to demand a memorial to Indrajit inside the Parliament's premises, and political rival and minister Nitish Kumar urged that his speeches be published as a guide for all new MPs.

But Indrajit was above all a very decent and considerate human being. At our first meeting he asked me about myself. Learning about my family, whom he knew and my upbringing, he was surprised and said that not many public school boys joined the Left movement in the seventies. 'But all

of you went to Cambridge,' I said. 'Those were different times, a time of revolutionary ferment just after the Great Depression. But I'm happy boys like you still join us.' In 1974, during the railway strike, JNU students had blockaded roads and fought a pitched battle with the police. When the CPI state leadership criticized the students, Indrajit loudly dissented and praised the solidarity with the railwaymen displayed by the students. 'How can you criticize students who face the police for the workers?'

But Indrajit was a realist. When asked about my future plans on our first meeting, I said I wanted to be a full-time trade union activist, he dissuaded me. 'Take your time. It is difficult for young comrades to deal with the demands of the TU bureaucracy. Become a good student. The movement needs good intellectuals.' Thereafter, almost every time I met him, Indrajit would ask questions about the work of left intellectuals. He was a practical parliamentarian. When we criticized neo-liberal economic reforms, he invariably asked 'what is the alternative?' When a couple of years ago, I gave him copies of the radical Alternative Economic Survey, he asked, 'Where is the alternative?' When I mentioned some alternate policies suggested, he was dismissive. 'That's just a wish list. You will have to be more concrete.'

When he was Home Minister, I met Indrajit to complain about a feeling that he was not forcing his policies through. 'Be a communist, not a gentleman,' I pleaded with him. 'Who told you communists should not be gentlemen? We are not gentlemen of privilege, but gentlemen of the people,' he replied.

Now that the dreaded cancer has laid low this gentle colossus, let us never forget this 'gentleman of the people', who gave his all till the very end for his people and country.

Kamal Mitra Chenoy

Whatever.

Whenever.

Wherever.

At AFL, we move anything and everything to anywhere
Now tell us when, where and what



 **AFL FREIGHT SYSTEMS • AFL LOGISTICS • AFL INDTRAVELS • AFL SHIPPING • AFL INFOTECH**

Airfreight Limited Neville House Currimbhoy Road, Ballard Estate Mumbai-400 001 • Tel 2656761-7

Ambience/AFL/367

women's groups) to assist in survey and finalizing list of beneficiaries, in documentation for compensation, damage assessment, Empower existing women's groups to play a key role in reaching out information and resources to affected people, Recognize and strengthen the role of committed citizens and local women/community groups in distribution of relief

Assessment and documentation in relation to deaths and damage to structures The process of listing could exclude beneficiaries belonging to minorities, vulnerable groups such as women-headed families, migrant labour, landless labour, disabled, destitute women, orphan girls and boys. Policy planning for the entitlements of affected include grants, loans, house and land titles, credit and livelihoods programmes. Addressing gender issues in planning and distribution of aid is extremely important.

Tasks

After the issuing of death certificates, compensation packages will be announced by the government. Technical teams will assess the extent of damage to structures and categorization of the affected villages will occur.

Listing of beneficiaries in these villages

Gram panchayats or village development committees need to be involved in this process. People need to be informed through gram sabhas or village assemblies.

NGOs can assist in organizing camps to inform communities and set up lok adalats/peoples' courts in villages for redressal of grievances on the beneficiaries list. (After the Latur quake, several resurveys were done. This went on for over one year. The list of beneficiaries grew with each survey. Inclusion in these lists became the focus of tremendous political pressure and conflict in the area.)

Community driven rehabilitation strategy

The key elements are

- † Build local capacities and skills instead of adopting a 'brick and mortar' approach to reconstruction
- † Form village development committees with participation of existing community institutions and women's groups as facilitators to manage entire rehabilitation
- † Community level monitoring of earthquake safety standards – village committees to monitor progress, women's groups trained to supervise earthquake safe construction, house owners informed on safety measures
- * Set up grievance redressal mechanisms at village cluster (5 to 10 villages) and taluka levels to address

conflicts on listing of beneficiaries and later for problem solving and effective feedback to government

† Decentralization of administration so that financial and technical assistance is within the reach of affected communities (not mediated by intermediaries)

* Plan for effective role of local governments/gram panchayats in planning and monitoring of rehabilitation ensure information flow and problem solving and provide infrastructure and services

† Ensure information on earthquake safety measures and entitlements to all house owners by effective use of media and other strategies

† Use of local skills and labour (retraining artisans on earthquake resistant technology)

† Enhance social effectiveness of women by building capacities to move from margin to mainstream

* Joint ownership of house and land titles – in the name of men and women

* State and district level government-NGO planning and coordination mechanisms for entire project period

* State and district administration to facilitate vertical and horizontal convergence of internal structures to optimize use of public schemes

† Facilitate public-private partnerships for economic and infrastructure development through convergence of resources and people

Reconstruction State-led rebuilding of completely destroyed villages and towns – in situ construction, Adoption of villages by private sector agencies

Concerns Relocation of villages could lead to creation of new infrastructure and services at enormous cost

Private sector may alienate the local leadership and communities and be insensitive to gender issues and participation by poor and lower caste groups

Government is unlikely to hold private sector agencies accountable to affected people

Where construction of new earthquake safe houses will be carried out by private agencies/religious trusts/donors/NGOs or government agencies, there is a need to effectively monitor. Right to information on entitlements to affected people, Distribution of houses and assistance especially to women headed household's minorities and weaker sections, Consultation with affected people on site location, housing and settlement layout, adequate provision for cattle and other animals, storage of grains, etc., Functioning of village development committees, Women's participation in community level planning, Training and employment of local artisans including masons and skilled labour

in earthquake resistant technology, Construction of earthquake safe houses by the agencies

Repair and strengthening of houses

Repair and strengthening of damaged structures, reconstruction of safe rooms, retrofitting of vulnerable structures

It is likely that an owner-driven effort to provide cash and materials to house owners will be initiated in the less affected areas across several districts. It is recommended that one time subsidy to house owners in the form of cash and materials be given (instead of several instalments) where the damage to structures is high/medium. In addition, low interest loans should be made available for those wanting to construct safe structures as part of a larger mitigation strategy.

The policy and programme support needed

† Appoint engineers for technical assistance to make plans and estimates with house owners for options on repair strengthening and reconstruction of homes

‡ Facilitate effective community participation by appointing community facilitators from women's groups (similar to Latur rehabilitation effort) for reaching out much needed information on entitlements, motivating people to contribute time, labour and skills, monitoring reconstruction of houses and providing on time information and feedback to the administration

* Empower gram panchayats for community problem solving – lack of masons, labour, lack of water, transport and delays in receiving assistance from the government, and so on

* Build local capacities and skills of artisans, informing house owners on earthquake safe technology by mass scale information and training strategy

* Demonstration of low cost, community led alternatives from the relief phase, temporary shelters, to repair/reconstruction of houses and building earthquake safe model houses/community buildings

* Ensure building codes and set up monitoring agencies at gram panchayats

‡ Install flexible legal procedures to facilitate NGOs, CBOs groups of home owners to undertake repair and strengthening of houses

* Local organizations and NGOs can play role in developing capacities of local artisans, women's groups, etc

Issues/concerns that need to be addressed in planning

Retrofitting/strengthening of structures. The magnitude of work related to housing structures in the region is massive and retrofitting as a strategy is made very

difficult because of the traditional houses which are built of stone and mud mortar. Even in houses constructed of cement concrete, retrofitting is a specialized operation.

Ensuring use of earthquake resistant technology. Mass level training of masons in earthquake resistant technology, Mass level training of community volunteers to supervise ERT construction, Creation of supervisory cadre among youth and women's groups trained to monitor earthquake safe construction, Use of mass communication strategies to educate house owners on new technology/materials and how to implement earthquake safety measures.

Institutional mechanisms for pilot and scaling up of EQR construction and innovations. Demonstrate alternatives in the areas of retrofitting of houses, low cost building materials, and training of skilled labour. The project will benefit from the creation of decentralised mechanisms such as area resource centres (which would function beyond the project) to disseminate information on reconstruction using earthquake safe technology.

Use of local labour, resources and building materials. Given the large scale nature of such intervention, construction materials, labour, planning and development activity will be externally determined – making affected people passive and forced into dependency. Experimentation, demonstration of the use of local materials – bricks, stone and mud – and design should be encouraged. Training of local artisans and increasing skilled labour pool. This will prevent rendering local artisans jobless, and setting up of construction related business and services by outsiders.

Information dissemination. No amount of information given to people at this stage is too much. People do not have means to acquire knowledge about safety measures to counter the after shocks. Similarly, there is a steep rise in myths and rumours as fears of earthquakes continue. Dissemination of scientific and correct information, demonstration of safe construction and mass level campaigns need to be done.

Employment generation linked to reconstruction. Priority for use of local materials, local labour, skills and resources, Employment exchange – listing of skilled personnel, artisans, Programme for retraining of engineers, artisans and other personnel, Policy support and legal measures to facilitate implementation of contracts for reconstruction, repair and strengthening by CBOs, NGOs, cooperatives, and so on.

Prema Gopalan

Communication

ONE gets the impression that Rukmini Bhaya Nair, in her cogently and perspicaciously argued presentation (*Seminar* 497, January 2001) of the psychological ramification and implications of the entity called National Anthem, is not explicitly against the canard that the Indian national anthem was composed as a loyal address to King-Emperor George V. Possibly this is due to the theoretic bias of the write-up which seeks to demonstrate the power of national anthems as 'psychological dynamos'. Nevertheless, readers would not have failed to get the intended meaning, even had the writer tried to clear the miasma of untruth which, unfortunately, still surrounds the background of our national anthem.

In any reference to India's national anthem it must not be forgotten that Tagore actually composed a five-stanza poem, and that only the first stanza has been adopted as India's national anthem. This canard should not have continued to live after Tagore personally, drawing attention to the third stanza of the poem, replied to the charge that the addressee was the King-Emperor. He clarified that the poem was untainted by the mundaneness of any empire or emperor, "That Great Charioteer of man's Destiny in age after age could not by any means be George V, George VI or any George" (Quoted by R. K. Dasgupta in 'Our National Anthem' in R. K. Dasgupta (ed.) *Our National Anthem*, University of Delhi, Delhi, 1961). Tagore was a poet of mystical and religious temperament, and this poem is addressed to *vidhata*, God himself. It approximates the status of a hymn, which explains its inclusion as song no. 1327 in the hymn-book of the Brahmo Samaj.

One feels Rukmini Bhaya Nair should have given some more space to 'the complicated background of this particular anthem,' and put it in the perspective of Tagore's philosophical framework whose operative principle was an attempt to touch the

mystical and the sublime, where Destiny and Eternity move and play their roles. Such a framework just cannot have any niche for a temporal George V. The quoted lines attributed to Tagore – 'Here is (a) poem I've written. It is addressed to the deity. But you may give it to the national committee. Perhaps it will content them' – should have been deconstructed into this contextual solidity. The perspective of the poet as a religio-mystical mind deserves and cries for such a deconstruction. What is more, it would have gone a long way in having a salutary effect of trying to put an end to the canard without having any adverse impact on the general tenor of the argument.

Rukmini Bhaya Nair rightly believes that Tagore was bitterly opposed to a narrow nationalism. This belief demands that no opportunity to demolish the canard should be lost, because the refusal of this canard to die has the danger of inducing a misreading of Tagore's cherished ideal of cosmopolitanism and playing into the hands of chauvinistic, narrow-minded and anti-liberal forces. His oeuvre forms an invaluable part of our heritage whose core is open-mindedness and forward-looking temperament. It is too precious for us to let anyone making it vulnerable to uncalled-for problematization. Narrow agenda-driven forces have a tendency to misrepresent those personalities, texts and messages which are multi-layered and complex.

Every discussion involving a reference to our national anthem, short or long, should be conscious of this real danger and contribute, at least in one or two lines, to the effort to give the infamous charge its final burial.

R.P. Singh

Assistant Professor,
Government College, Lal Bahadur Nagar,
District Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh

THE article, 'Sharing Dreams' (*Seminar* 496) by Firdous Syed stands out among the excellent pieces on Kashmir as it is written in an autobiographical mode by a ex-Kashmiri militant/combatant who is now a National Conference MLC in Jammu and Kashmir. Syed, in an honest confession, attributes his conscious decision to leave militancy to the realisation about the futility and destructiveness of armed struggle as 'a means to achieve our ends' in Kashmir. The incident draws our attention to the callousness of the India state as Syed, despite his surrender and undergoing jail sentence, not to mention the disowning by fellow Kashmiris, was pressurised to prove his credentials by 'taking to the gun, though on the other side now'. It is to his credit that despite having such a shattering experience Syed thought in terms of trying 'to act to intervene in civil society on the ground, so that together we could begin to turn the tide away from self-destruction towards something positive and life-giving rather than death-dealing'.

One cannot help but appreciate the steps contemplated by Syed to 'find the right way to continue the struggle for dignity and self-respect, for peace with honour for development and change in the conditions of the people'. Likewise, not many of us would grudge Syed when he essentialises Kashmiri masses' urge for *azadi* in terms of 'a free and democratic society, a secular and liberal society in which all of us could live in peace and without humiliation or oppression' in tenor with 'Kashmiriyat which is (their) civilisational ethos and identity'.

However, a problem erupts when Syed argues that there can be space for *azadi* within 'the secular, democratic tradition of India itself'. One would do well to remind Syed that the conversion of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference in 1939 was the result of an effort for broadening the mass base of the political movement in Kashmir against a feudal monarchical Dogra regime by radicalising its ideology and secularising its organisational structure. Way back in the fifties, Sheikh Abdullah, while addressing the Constituent Assembly of the state, had justified his decision to opt for India precisely for those secular democratic traditions of India which Syed mentions. In his words 'As a state, we are concerned mainly with agriculture and trade. We are sure that in alliance with landlord-ridden Pakistan, with so many feudal privileges intact, the economic reform will be tolerated. The most powerful argument that can be advanced in her favour is that Pakistan is a Muslim state, and so are a big majority of

our people. Being a Muslim state is of course a camouflage. It is a screen to dupe the common man, so that he may not see clearly that Pakistan is a feudal state in which a clique is trying by these methods to maintain itself in power'.

It follows that Sheikh had more faith in India. He stated that, 'India was different (from Pakistan). There were parties and individuals in India whose views were identical to ours'. The fact that India was going through the process of Constitution-making, privileging the values of democracy, secularism, federalism and so on contributed to his and his masses' confidence in Kashmir's relationship with India. It was a contractual relationship based on the principle of 'asymmetrical federalism' guaranteeing the ethno-cultural identity of Kashmiri people vide constitutional provisions like Article 370. The logic of Kashmir's politics, therefore, has always revolved around the demand for 'self-rule' and the political responses of the people have always been expressed in terms of *azadi* for the Kashmir *mulk* (country) and *quam* (nation).

One wishes that Syed had the courage to write about the 'constitutional integrationist' approach of the Indian state to the detriment of the above mentioned trust in the secular democratic tradition of the Indian Union. The State Autonomy Committee (SAC), constituted by the state government to examine and recommend measures for the restoration of the autonomy 'consistent with the instrument of accession, the Constitution Application Order, 1950 and the Delhi Agreement of 1952', has in its report highlighted the continuous process of erosion of the state's autonomy by the successive Union governments. Out of 395 articles of the Indian Constitution, 260 have been made applicable to the state. Out of 97 subjects in the Concurrent List, 26 subjects and out of 12 Schedules, 7 Schedules are also applicable to the state, now due to 42nd Constitution amendment (applicable to Jammu and Kashmir) orders (SAC Report 1999: 42-57).

The pertinent question is: How can the Kashmiri people trust a state and have effective communication with it when the same state has repeatedly justified its pursuit of 'hegemonising' and 'homogenised' politics in the name of its sovereignty and integrity (not to mention its 'secularism')? How can they forget that their idea of India as a federal democratic entity was understood in terms of 'parity' and 'negotiability' with the Union? No doubt, then, they are averse to the processes leading to 'hierarchy'

and 'assimilation' perpetrated by the Indian state over the last five decades. One can always recall the many rigged elections in the Valley. Syed should have mentioned how the ad hoc policies of installing 'puppet' governments and economic appeasement aimed at buying the loyalty of the masses have boomeranged as Kashmiri people rightly feel widespread alienation resulting from decades of misgovernance, institutionalised corruption, denial of rights, and the lack of development — in sum, the very antithesis of democracy.

The above brings us to Syed's decision to join the NC as the 'logical next step' ostensibly to fulfil his 'burning desire' for the Kashmiri people. Any discernible observer of Kashmir would argue that the NC, which came into power in 1996 after seven years of President's rule, has done great disservice to the people's cause in terms of their urge for peace and development. Indeed, it is a beleaguered NC government, highly unpopular because of lack of development, misgovernance and institutionalised corruption, which has diluted its original project, moving it from its 'pristine form' as mentioned above to the current 'pragmatic' talk of devolution of more powers to the state. So much for the 'Farooq doctrine of accepting a subordinate relationship with the 'Centre'.

The revival of civil society and its institutions in Kashmir can be possible only if the Indian state allows free and fair elections when the state goes to the polls for the assembly seats next year. Only a genuinely elected government can represent the people and negotiate on their behalf. For providing a democratic government accountable to the people of the state and not to the Centre, it is imperative that not only the jurisdiction of the federal, autonomous constitutional bodies and laws be retained over the state (regardless of SAC recommendations or, the Hurriyat's demands) but also that institutions of local self-government be made more effective. The panchayat elections were held after 23 years but the Panchayati Raj Act is yet to be amended. Syed's emphasis about the need to evolve a strategy of rural development as well as its implementation can be effectively put into concrete action only with the help of democratically empowered local self-governing bodies.

Ashutosh Kumar

Reader, Department of Political Science,
Panjab University, Chandigarh

from Oxford

The Millennium Book on New Delhi

B P Singh & Pavan K. Varma (editors)

An introductory essay by **B.P. Singh** establishes both the purpose and content of the book in which New Delhi emerges as a mirror of the hopes and aspirations of one billion Indians marching into the new millennium. **Khushwant Singh's** essay is a historical sketch of Delhi. **Ravinder Kumar** focuses on the way post-Independence New Delhi metamorphosed from a centre of imperial power to a vibrant capital. **Sumita Kohli** highlights the architectural legacy of Lutyens' Delhi while **Premalata Puri** looks at the city's art, music, and literary traditions. **Ranjit Lal's** essay acquaints the reader with the diversity of Delhi's flora and fauna, much of which is being submerged by rapid urbanization. **Madhu Jain's** is a spirited account of the pace and rhythm of life in Delhi and the social profile of the city's inhabitants. **Mark Tully** describes the hazards of the nation's capital while **Bibek Debroy** profiles the city's economy — Delhi is now a major industrial and business centre, fulfilling the demands of various sectors. The epilogue by **Pavan K. Varma** is a meditation on the city, a glance at its past and a look into its future. A chronology of events by **H.K. Kaul** identifies the key moments in the history of New Delhi.

0195654455 2001 324 mm x 235 mm 272 pages Rs 2900

Antinomies of Society

Essays on Ideologies & Institutions

André Bêteille

'The great merit of Bêteille's writings derives from his sensitivity to the complexities of life, the ambiguities of thought and action and the shadow that invariably falls between the idea and the reality.'

— Sham Lal, former editor, *The Times of India*

'Bêteille has been one of the few recent writers to have significantly advanced our understanding of equality and inequality. [W]e are grateful to him for his clear, insightful and beautifully coherent writing which reveals so much about our predicament. Like other major thinkers, he stands between worlds and helps to illuminate our options.'

— Alan Macfarlane, FBA, Professor of Anthropological Science, University of Cambridge, and Fellow, King's College, Cambridge

0195653890 2000 215 x 140 mm 307 pp. Rs 525

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

2/11 Ansan Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002 • Oxford House, Apollo Bunder, Mumbai 400001 • Plot No A1-5, Block GP, Sector V, Salt Lake Electronics Complex, Calcutta 700091 • Oxford House, 219 Anna Salai, Chennai 600006 • A-282, Indira Nagar, Lucknow 226016 • 94, Koramangala Industrial Area, 4th 'B' Cross, 5th Block, B'lore 560095 • Gayatri Sadan, 2060 Sadashiv Peth, VN Colony, Pune 411030 • Hasan Manzil Complex, Frazer Road, Patna 800001 • 3-5-1107 Narayanaguda, Hyderabad 500029 • Danish Road, Panbazar, Guwahati 781001 • Kesava Buildings, 1 Floor, TC No 25/1437 (2) Thampanoor Thiruvananthapuram 695001 • SCO 4 & 5, 1 Floor, Sector 17B, Chandigarh 160017

1BHO Jul/11/2001

Backpage

MORE than a month after the event the Gujarat earthquake, which devastated large parts of the state, mainly Kutch and Saurashtra, continues to generate tremors. As the initial numbing and trauma created by the extent of death and destruction starts fading, both state and society have to gear themselves up for the long-haul task of reconstruction and rehabilitation. One only hopes that this time around we will be able to overcome our proclivity for partisan political agendas and knee-jerk policy suggestions.

In one respect Gujarat is fortunate. Unlike Orissa, wracked by the super cyclone last year, the western state will not be as easily forgotten. Possibly the fact that the state is a major industrial and commercial hub, site of our biggest petro-chemical complexes, that the Gujaratis have a substantial presence in the influential NRI world, and that a significant proportion of the victims were 'people like us' may for once ensure concerted action. Equally if not more important is that Gujarat is home to a vibrant NGO community which has already taken the lead, both in organising relief and planning reconstruction.

These fortuitous circumstances ensured an unprecedented show of concern from the normally apathetic middle class, corporate India and the NRI community. For an administration not famed for its efficiency and in any case stunned by the magnitude of the task, the concern itself – expressed in the inflow of materials and people – became a problem. Barely had we recovered from the controversy over the number of dead, with our Defence Minister taking the lead in propagating inflated figures, we were saddled with images of relief materials piled up on roads and wrangling over which people, communities and regions were receiving aid and which not. The last in particular was seized with glee by opposition parties who not only accused the Sangh Parivar of partisan behaviour in the selection of relief recipients but the central government for giving a blank cheque to the state government since Gujarat is a BJP run state. Evidently, even national tragedies cannot overcome political faultlines.

As much as the need to firm up a disaster management plan, often talked about but never put into place, is to learn from the experiences of Latur, not Uttarkashi – two regions visited by earthquakes in the last decade. Uttarkashi witnessed a pouring in of relief, a proliferation of agencies each claiming their share of the calamity market, but little by way of

either durable structures, planned community clusters, what to speak of ensuring that the affected got appropriate employment and income opportunities.

Latur, by most accounts, did far better, ostensibly because systems were put in place which ensured synergy between state and non-state actors. Central to the reconstruction exercise was the involvement of the community at all stages. For once we built new villages which did not look like extensions of a PWD vision – with each house enjoying a distinct personality. Local people were trained as masons leading to not only lower costs but personal supervision. And care was taken to build community structures designed to withstand greater shocks.

Gujarat poses a more complex problem – logistically and politically – because of significant urban destruction, including in state capital Ahmedabad. Everyone realises that more than old buildings it was the relatively recent structures, including luxury high-rises, that collapsed. But will someone be brought to book for the criminal flouting of building norms and city land-use plans? Unless this is done, who will be confident that the earlier process will not be repeated?

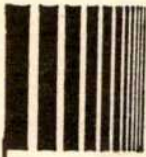
A few years back the fire in a Delhi cinema-hall, Uphaar, claimed many lives. That too was a high-profile incident highlighting the non-observance of fire safety regulations and procedures. The case against the accused is still in court, an annual memorial meeting is held at the site. But, despite the outcry, few multi-storey buildings, including those of the government, conform to norms.

This is crucial. As a society, we remain impervious to the need for compliance with public safety standards, even less for the maintenance of safety systems. Not surprisingly, as more of our people move into crowded urban complexes, disasters are just waiting to happen – be it earthquakes or fires or what.

Spectacular events like the Kutch earthquake have a way of driving home these points. But the reconstruction of Orissa hardly demonstrates that the appropriate lessons have sunk in. No major effort, for instance, is underway to re-introduce mangrove plantations on the coast, an effective barrier against tidal waves and cyclones. And now that Gujarat has supplanted Orissa in our consciousness, even the little that was being done has stopped.

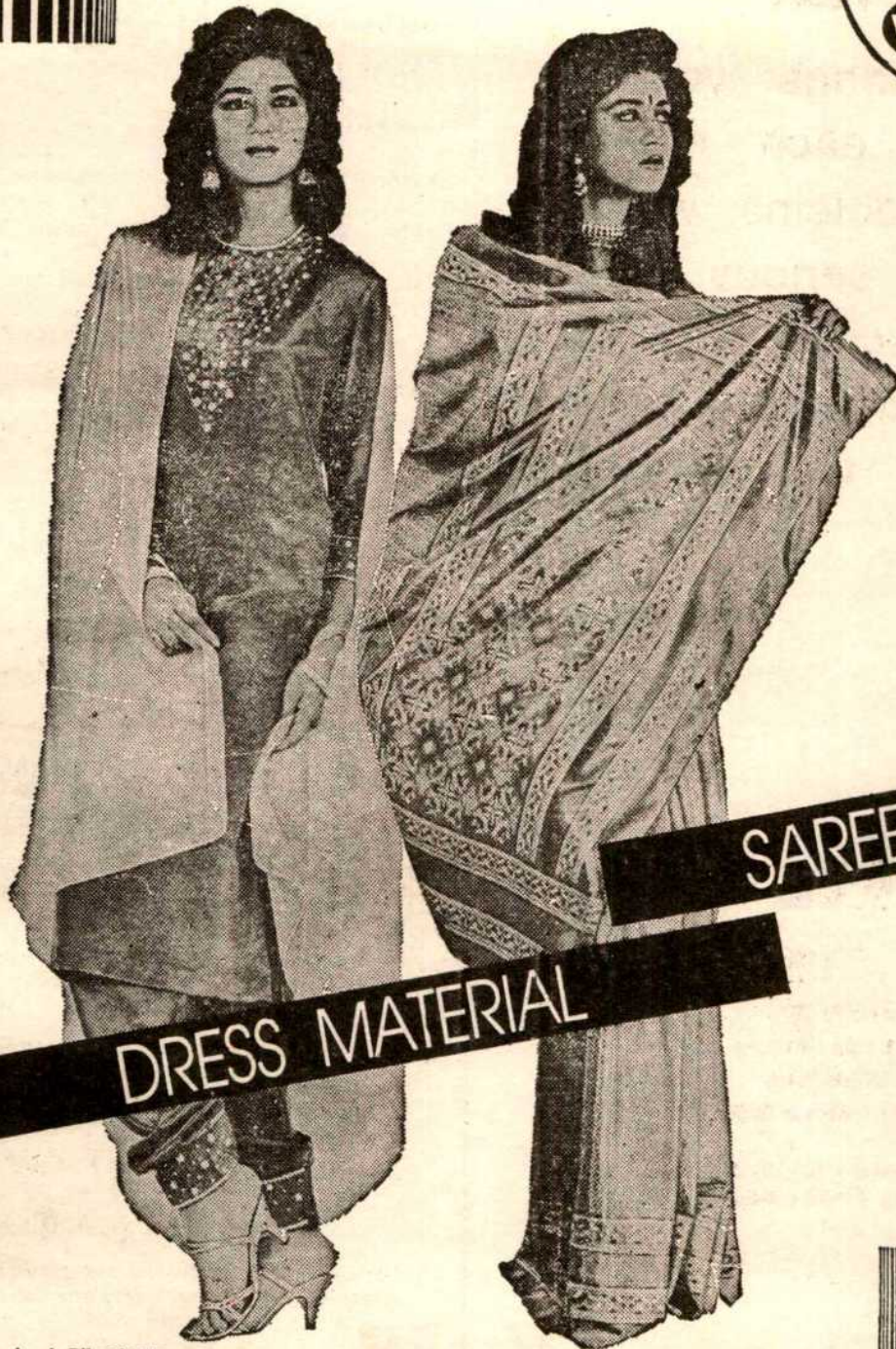
So, will we ever learn?

Harsh Sethi



Sweet Memories

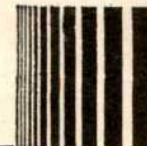
VIMAL
A BOUTIQUE PROJECT



SAREES

DRESS MATERIAL

Mudra:A:RIL:4243B



seminar

Seminar brings you a discussion each month on the problems which agitate all serious people. Subscribe to it today and participate actively in the thinking life of India...

Subscription rates:

Period	India	S. Asia	Rest of world
1 year	Rs 250	Rs 350	US\$ 50 £ 35
3 years	Rs 700	Rs 900	US\$ 125 £ 80

- * Single copy Rs 25 (annual no. Rs 50)
- * Add Rs 20 or US\$ 2 or £ 1 on outstation cheques
- * Add US\$ 20 or £ 10 for airmail yearly
- * Cheque/DD/MO should be made in favour of 'Seminar Publications'

Seminar, F-46, Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi 110001
Tel: 3316534 Fax: 3316445 E-mail: seminar@vsnl.com

We are on the Internet now, please direct your browsers to:
www.india-seminar.com

A note from SEMINAR

Dear Subscriber,

We post SEMINAR on the 1st of every month. If your copy does not reach you by the fifteenth of the month, please inform us immediately so that we can send a replacement. Complaint of non-receipt of copies at a later date makes it impossible for us to do anything in the matter.

Circulation Manager
SEMINAR
Post Box 338, New Delhi 110001
Tel: 91-011-3316534
Fax: 91-011-3316445
E-mail: seminar@vsnl.com
Website: www.india-seminar.com

STATEMENT ABOUT OWNERSHIP And other particulars about newspaper (SEMINAR) FORM IV

(see Rule 8)

Place of publication
New Delhi

Periodicity of its publications:
Monthly

Publishers name, nationality and address:
Malvika Singh
Indian
67-F, Sujan Singh Park, New Delhi 110003

Editors name, nationality and address
Tejvir Singh
Indian
67-F, Sujan Singh Park, New Delhi 110003

Name, and address of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital:
Malvika Singh
67-F, Sujan Singh Park, New Delhi 110003

I, Malvika Singh hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Malvika Singh
Signature of Publisher
25.02.2001



A smile. A teardrop. A raised eyebrow.
A flare of the nostrils. A frown. These are
just a few manifestations of a language
that transcends the spoken word.

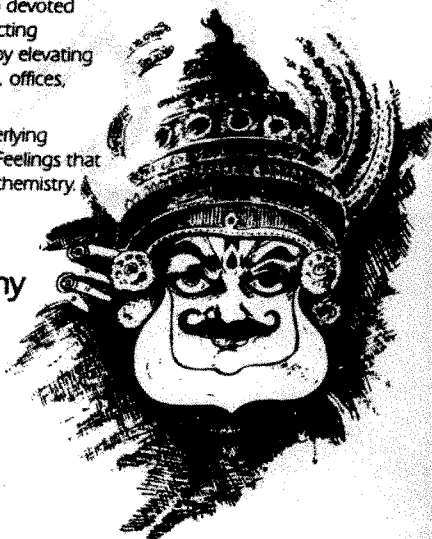
Spontaneously communicating
feelings like ardour, agony, ecstasy,
excitement, fervour, fright, passion and
pain. All housed in the human body and
triggered by amazing chemical reactions.

Devotion and dedication have enabled a
handful to master the art of self-expression.
Fostering it to perfection. In the visual arts,
the performing arts, music and dance.

At Herdillia, we've also devoted
over two decades perfecting
chemical reactions, thereby elevating
the quality of life. In homes, offices,
industries and in agriculture.

It's our way of expressing underlying
feelings. Like concern and care. Feelings that
are an inherent part of Herdillia's chemistry.

Excitement, anxiety, agony
and ecstasy -
some amazing chemical
reactions we all possess




**HERDILLIA
CHEMICALS
LIMITED**

Air India Building,
Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021

Because chemicals are a fact of life

The ISO 9002 certification covers the facilities for Phenol, Acetone, Phthalic Anhydride,
Diacetone Alcohol, Dodecyl Phenol, Isobutyl Benzene, Diphenyl Oxide and Isophorone.



Durgam Cheruvu

NEW PERSPECTIVES IN SOUTH ASIAN HISTORY

Just Released!

from
Orient Longman

Health, Medicine and Empire: Perspectives on Colonial India

Rs 600.00

Biswamoy Pati and Mark Harrison (ed.)

The focus of the essays in this collection ranges from analysing Europe's relationship with India's indigenous medical systems, to case studies of two mental asylums, the location of the leprosy asylum, the technological aspects and social implications of the colonial vaccination policy, and colonial interventions related specifically to cholera and plague in the pilgrims centres of Puri and Pandharpur. The volume also examines indigenous initiatives associated with the Indian drug industry and the Unani medical system and their interactions with the colonial health establishment and modern medicine.

Situating Social History: Orissa (1800-1997)

Rs 380.00

Biswamoy Pati

This volume brings together six essays and a field note, which together demonstrate the complexities and diversities that constitute the social history of Orissa over the last two hundred years. Using a range of sources—archival material, rare printed tracts, sessions court proceedings, literary works, oral testimonies and folk songs—author Biswamoy Pati creates a fascinating and multi-faceted social picture of Orissa in the modern period.

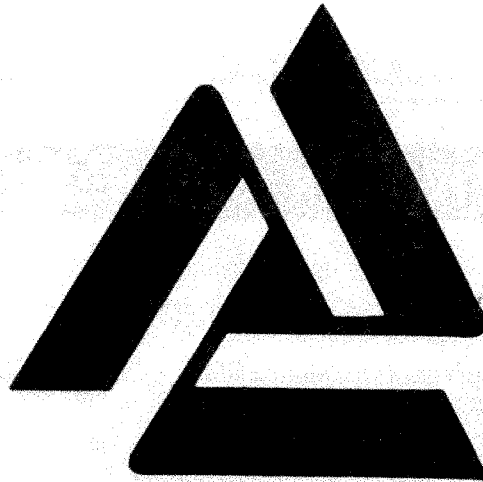


Orient Longman Limited

3-6-272 Himayatnagar, Hyderabad 500 029; Tel: (040) 322 4305, 322 0306, 322 4294, Fax: (040) 322 2900

Email: editor@pol.net.in / orlongco@hd2.dot.net.in

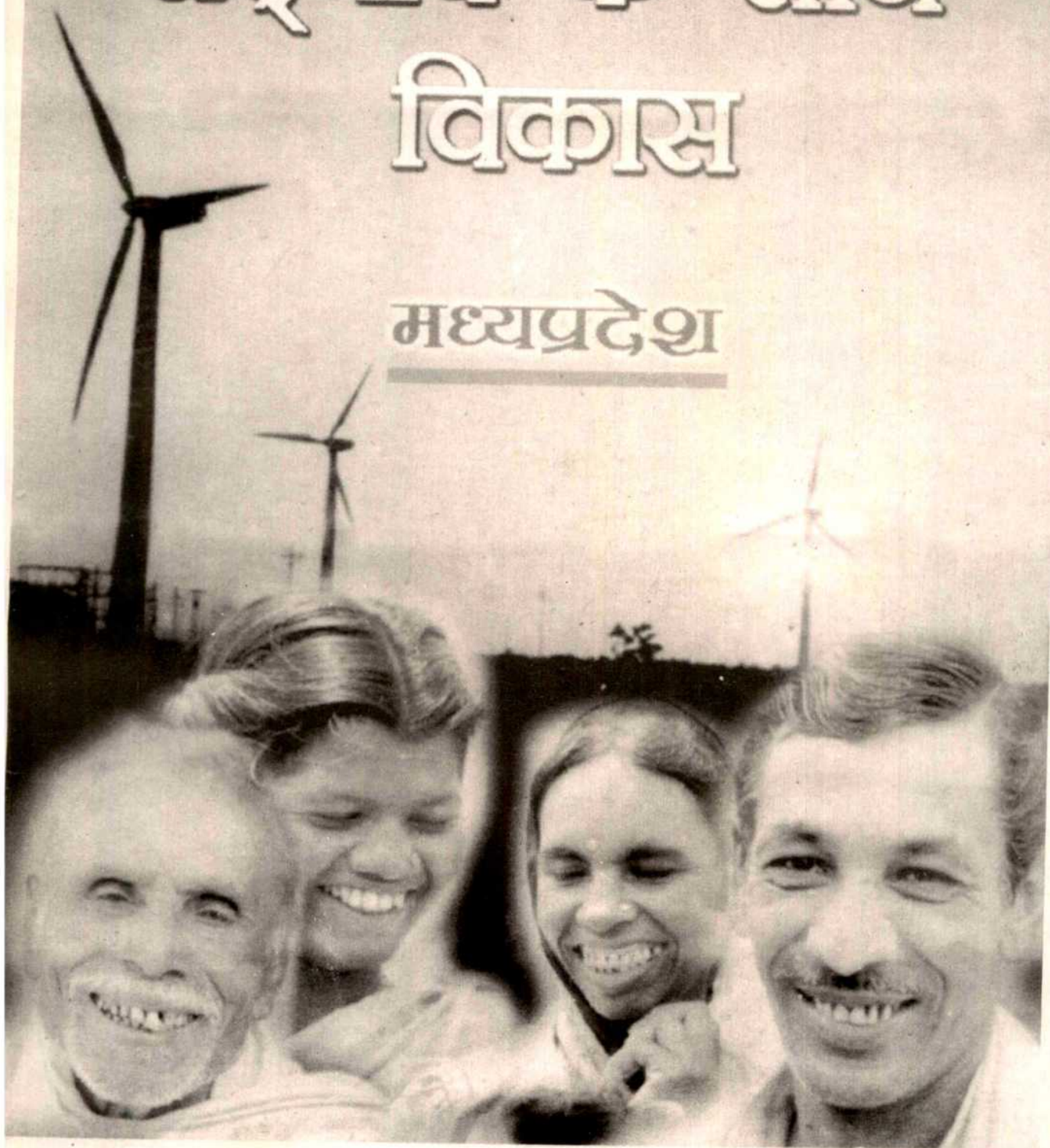
IL&FS



INFRASTRUCTURE LEASING &
FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED

सद्भाव के साथ विकास

मध्यप्रदेश





EICHER 11.10

Salient Features :

- Full Air Brakes : 'S' Cam Roller follower type.
- Strong Chassis Frame : Straight Ladder type (6mm Thick).
- Longer Wheel Base (3800 mm).
- More Loading Space 16 feet (L) x 7 feet (W)
- Heavy Duty Tyres : 7.50 x 20-12 PR.
- 190 litres capacity fuel tank suited for long distance operations.
- 10 Material & Labour free services.
- Available in Cabin & Chassis (CBC), Fixed Side Dec' (FSD), Drop Side Deck (DSD) and High Side Deck (HSC) Versions.

**When the going gets tough.
The tough gets going.**

Eicher 11.10 -- A 7 ton payload MCV is one of the toughest in its class. Especially designed to withstand the demanding Indian road conditions, this rugged truck from Eicher stable is ideal for long running operations and no matter what comes, gets the tough going.

EICHER MOTORS LIMITED Trucks • Buses • Built-up Vehicles

Regd. Office & Works : 102, Industrial Area No. 1, Pithampur-454775, Dist. Dhar (M.P.) Tel. : 07292-53101-4. Fax : 07292-53109. Cable : EICHWORKS.
Regional Offices : DELHI : Tel. : 6413751, 6413759, 6449772. CALCUTTA : Tel. : 2296773, 2299429. THANE : Tel. : 5340459, 5342483, 5448166.
CHENNAI : Tel. : 8260856, 8284973. BANGALORE : Tel. : 2271870, 2279129. INDORE : Tel. : 432936, 537207. LUCKNOW : Tel. : 370688, 331688

Visit us at : <http://www.eicherworld.com>

Printed and Published by Malvika Singh on behalf of the Romeshraj Trust from Malhotra Building, Janpath,
New Delhi and Printed by her at Kapidhvaj Printers, 639, Bawli Street, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055